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Albania: Serreqi, Greek FM Agree on Kosovo, Border Issues

AU2203205996 Tirana TVSH Television Network in Albanian 1900 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Albanian and Greek Foreign Ministers Alfred Serreqi and Theodoros Pangalos held a meeting within the framework of Greek President Stefanopoulos's visit to Albania. The two foreign ministers focused on examining the situation in the Balkan region, particularly after the Dayton peace accord.

Foreign Minister Serreqi focused in particular on the Kosova problem, stressing that the international community should take the appropriate measures to prevent a conflict in Kosova, which would be of dangerous consequences for the entire region, as well as to demilitarize the province, return the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] observers, prevent ethnic cleansing and Serbian colonization, and reopen the democratic and legitimate institutions of Kosova, thus enabling the creation of a climate of dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade.

Within this context, the influence of Greece as the only Balkan country that is a member of the European Union and NATO, as well as a country that has specific relations with Serbia, would be welcomed.

Once again, Mr. Serreqi demanded that the integration of former Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Montenegro into international structures be conditional on a solution to the Kosova issue. Mr. Serreqi underlined the viewpoint of the Albanian Government on the inviolability of borders and respect for nations' self-determination as a universal principle in the negotiated solution of this problem, in the presence of a third party, which would guarantee the implementation of the issue.

Serreqi stressed that the task of the international community is to exert pressure on Belgrade so that the Kosova issue not be simply treated as an internal affair of Serbia or as a human rights issue within the framework of minorities, but as an issue related to the solution of the national issue.

In treating various aspects of bilateral relations, Foreign Minister Serreqi referred to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which creates space for resolving many issues left pending.

Regarding the issue of the Greek-Albanian border, Minister Serreqi stressed the need to expeditiously finalize the Albanian side's proposals, which were welcomed by the Greek side, and which will lay the foundations for the creation of a regular regime of security on our common borders.

Raising the need for the free circulation of citizens, they agreed to work out a consular agreement that will enable procedures to be facilitated for free movement, particularly of people dealing with business, science, art, and culture.

They also agreed that they should work to institutionalize the seasonal employment between the two countries, and specifically work to finally legalize Albanian emigrants, the majority of whom have already been integrated into Greek life.

Both foreign ministers agreed to further strengthen relations between the two countries in the economic field as well.

Albania: Greek FM Comments After Meeting With Serreqi

NC2203180496 Athens Elliniki Radhiofonia Radio Network in Greek 1600 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Greece will probably use its veto next Tuesday [26 March] during the Turkey-EU Association Council. This was contained in Foreign Minister Theodhoros Pangalos's statements following his meeting with his Albanian counterpart Alfred Serreqi in Tirana.

The minister said: Turkey's escalation of its provocations in relation to the status of the Dodecanese leads the Greek Government to insist on using its veto to block EU funding to Ankara. Pangalos stressed that during its talks with the Italian presidency and the EU troika, the Turkish Government not only did not make any statement of good intentions concerning the Imia incident, it even attempted to justify in writing its claims to the Dodecanese. The Greek side, however, continues to pressure its EU partners to take a unanimous stance in denouncing Turkish behavior and demanding an end to such claims. The Greek minister pointed out that from now on a prerequisite for improving Turkey's relations with the EU will be Ankara's explicit abandonment of its territorial claims to the Dodecanese.

According to diplomatic circles, this stance is expected to cause Washington to step up pressure, so that a discussion of confidence-building measures will begin between Athens and Ankara. The first move has already been taken by the Albanian Government, which has invited the United States and the Balkan defense ministers—except the ministers of Romania and Serbia—to a meeting on arms control at the end of March in Tirana. Pangalos explained to his Albanian counterpart Alfred Serreqi that it is not possible to discuss security in the Balkans without the participation of countries such as Romania and Serbia, while the United

States has been invited. The Greek minister made it clear to his Albanian counterpart that our country will not participate in this meeting, since the Greek Government considers that if it participates it will certainly be obliged to begin a dialogue with Ankara. Further explaining our country's unwillingness to participate in this meeting, Pangalos said Greece prefers that these Balkan meetings be held without the presence of [non-Balkan] dear and respectable friends.

Albania: Greek President Meets Omonia, Party Leaders

AU2203213196 Tirana TVSH Television Network in Albanian 1900 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Report by Bujar Muharremi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The second day of Greek President Stefanopoulos's visit to our country started with a meeting with representatives of the Omonia organization [Greek minority organization]. On this occasion, they stressed that the visit is historic and opens a new page in the relations between our two countries.

Greek President Stefanopoulos then met representatives of political parties of our country, with whom he discussed the prospects of expanding bilateral cooperation. At these meetings, Mr. Stefanopoulos reiterated that Greece does not wish to interfere in Albania's internal affairs and that it is in Greece's interest to have good relations with every Albanian government, regardless of the political parties that form it.

President Stefanopoulos considered his visit as the start of a new alliance that has noble aims and is directed against no one. [passage omitted]

With thanks from President Sali Berisha, the Albanian state, and the Greek ambassador in Tirana, Khristos Tsalikis, Greek President Stefanopoulos is taking with him the treaty of friendship and cooperation between our two countries and his impressions on democracy here.

Albania: Meksi Confirms Kosovo 'Not a Burden' for State

AU2303192396 Tirana TVSH Television Network in Albanian 1735 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] In an interview for ORA [THE TIME] journal, Albanian Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi responded to many questions on the Albanian Government's achievements over the past four years. Regarding Kosova, Meksi says that it is not a burden for the mother state. For more details, here is a telephone report from Prishtina by correspondent Mehmet Haziri:

[Haziri] Talking about the situation in Kosova and the possibilities of resolving its issue, Albanian Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi points out that a second Dayton and a new negotiating table are needed to seek a solution for the Kosova issue. On the contrary, Mr. Meksi assessed, the achievements we have so far attained would be compromised regarding the stability of the situation in the Balkans. Meksi said that it should be clear that the Kosova issue cannot be resolved without mediation by the United States, NATO, and Europe, because he said, one of the sides, which is Serbia, lacks the will.

Responding to criticisms that time and again are articulated in Prishtina on Albania's policy on the Kosova issue, Mr. Meksi says that in foreign policy, the national question has been a firsthand issue for the Albanian Government. Many of the changes, in the judgment of large European states, etc., in favor of the Albanian issue of Kosova have been the result of the presence of Albania's policy at the negotiating tables and in European and international offices and chancelleries, Meksi said.

Kosova is not a burden for the Albanian state, and I do not know of Albanian officials and the majority of the Albanian people to have considered the Albanian issue, within whose framework is the issue of Kosova, that of Albanians in Montenegro or Greece, as a burden for the Albanian state. This has been a moral, national, and political obligation, a priority, because we have considered that without the solution to the Albanian question, there can be no progress by Albania in the Balkans, Albanian Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi stated in the interview given to the journal ORA and broadcast by the Kosova Information Center.

Czech Republic: Commentary: Only Old News From Christopher

AU2203140796 Prague MLADA FRONTA DNES in Czech 21 Mar 96 p 12

[Commentary by Lubos Palata: "Christopher Confirmed What We Already Knew"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of U.S. diplomacy did not come to tell his East European colleagues anything they would not already have heard from Washington. The outcome of the visit by the U.S. secretary of state is more comforting than satisfactory.

A repetition of Washington's familiar assurances that the decision on NATO enlargement is unalterable and that the December date for the decision on who will become new members and when is also unchanged is, however, evidently the best thing we can hear from the U.S. representative at the moment.

It is crucial for our aspirations that, before his visit to Moscow, where a similar statement was made yesterday by Alliance Secretary General Solana, Christopher gave assurances that there could be no doubts about whether the states of East Europe have the right to become members of the alliance. Similarly, he did not say one word in support of the compromise in the form of merely political membership in NATO for the new countries as put forward by the head of Russian diplomacy. On the other hand, he declared that the newcomers have the right to be a full-fledged part of the alliance, with, of course, all of the risks that NATO membership brings.

At the same time, however, he emphasized that Russia cannot be isolated and that it is necessary to maintain as close ties of alliance with it as possible; he described the successful Partnership for Peace program and, first and foremost, the IFOR [Implementation Force] mission in Bosnia as the basis for these ties. It would be fitting if these comments were to find a favorable response among Czech representatives because resistance to this orientation of U.S. policy toward Russia could harm our attempt to join the alliance.

Although Christopher emphasized the U.S. desire for NATO enlargement, he warned that, for example, the unclarified relations between Slovakia and Hungary concerning ethnic minorities are an unacceptable source of tension for Washington, and he called upon the Bratislava parliament to ratify the treaty with Budapest. At the same time, it was also a warning to the region's other countries to solve similar problems because this could damage their hopes of admission to the alliance. Christopher did not bring any unprecedented news to Prague. But even old news does not have to be bad news.

Czech Republic: NATO Entry 'Pertinent' Security Solution

AU2303165896 Prague LIDOVE NOVINY in Czech 21 Mar 96 p 8

[Article by Michal Lobkowicz, a Christian Democratic Party deputy and director of the Czech foreign minister's office: "In Prague Apropos the Security Situation in Europe"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of a state's basic tasks is to guarantee territorial integrity and defense against an external threat. It is natural that the Czech Government also considers this objective to be a political task of fundamental importance.

It is ever more obvious that the security situation in Europe following the collapse of the two-bloc system is complicated and unclear and that dealing with this situation has become the number-one topic of a series of international discussions. One such important meeting is taking place in Prague now.

The Czech Government's policy proceeds from the assumption that it is necessary to take two fundamental steps to improve the Czech Republic's security situation. One of these is the thorough transformation of our Army; the current situation demands its transformation into an independent and mobile army that would be able to support the sovereign state. A great deal has already been done here; despite this, it is still necessary to exert considerable effort to gradually improve the professionalism of our troops and the quality of their equipment. Last, but not least, the Army has to win back the citizens' confidence, tarnished by bad experiences in the past.

In view of the current risks, however, it is not easy even for the highest-quality army to defend the state on its own. In the wake of our historical experiences, defense covenants based on an alliance appear to be most appropriate, while the only pertinent solution to our security situation is admission into the North Atlantic Alliance, the only functioning institution of this type.

NATO is all the more attractive for us because it represents not only a military grouping, but also a political union of culturally related states. During the almost 50 years of its history, NATO has consistently shown itself to be an effective and also democratic defensive alliance. Its existence made a significant contribution to the collapse of the communist regimes in our country and in the other states of Central and East Europe. After the political changes of 1989, our country repeatedly acknowledged the values on which the alliance is based and expressed a categorical interest in full-fledged membership in it, with all of the advantages and commitments that ensue from it.

A desire to enlarge is also obvious on the part of the North Atlantic Alliance. Proof of this is, for example, the ongoing Partnership for Peace project, which has significantly improved the quality of communication between the alliance and the candidates for future membership. NATO is also dealing with the issue of enlargement in its internal study drafted on the basis of a decision made by the member states' foreign ministers at the beginning of last year. In its conclusions, it repeats the assertion that the alliance's enlargement is not directed against any third party and confirms that the new members should obtain the statute of full-fledged members. So far, the study is dealing with how and why the alliance should be enlarged. The issue of who should be admitted to NATO and when is left for further negotiation between the alliance and the candidates. It is apparent from the North Atlantic Council meeting in December 1995 that, during 1996, intense negotiations should take place between NATO and the partner countries interested in admission. Their outcome should be a decision on who should enter the alliance and when.

The Czech Republic, of course, will make use of this opportunity and will strive to obtain the statute of "official candidate" for membership. At present, in view of the results of their political and economic transformation, the Czech Republic and Poland are considered to be the most serious candidates. It is in the interest of the Czech Republic and also of NATO that the zone of security guaranteed by the North Atlantic Alliance in the future relates to the whole of the Central European region. Apart from the other serious contenders for membership, Hungary and Slovakia, representatives from other states—Slovenia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, the Baltic states, and Macedonia—will attend the Prague meetings. Although it is highly unlikely that all of these countries could become alliance members at once, a demonstration of joint interest in membership, however, may bolster the West's interest in this region.

From the point of view of our candidacy, the fact that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's meeting with the representatives of the Central and East European countries is taking place in Prague is an important signal. The overall context of his current European tour is also significant, first and foremost, because, after the Prague conference, Christopher will visit Moscow, whose stance, undoubtedly, is of importance for European security. The talks currently taking place in Prague will, without doubt, be reflected in the future development of the North Atlantic Alliance's enlargement process.

Czech Republic: Impact on NATO of Duma's USSR Decision

AU2203142396 Prague LIDOVE NOVINY in Czech 21 Mar 96 p 1

[Commentary by Stanislav Drahny: "We Will Wait for Moscow"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prague was the capital of Central and East Europe yesterday. The foreign ministers of the region's 12 reform countries came to acquaint U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with their views on NATO enlargement and the opportunities for transatlantic cooperation. His message was clear and explicit: Europe's eastern borders end where there are still shared common ideals—that is, faith in human liberty and the free market—and not where this continent has its geographical borders. He also said that the new democracies cannot be left in NATO's waiting room forever and that only the alliance has the right to decide on whom it will accept as a new member.

Following these careful statements, it seems that the obvious uncertainty over whether it is better not to irritate Moscow or not to frustrate the young Central European democracies has begun to disperse. It seems, paradoxically, that the recent decision by the Russian Duma has also, to a certain extent, contributed to this. Its flirtation with the possibility of reviving the defunct Soviet Union may, in the final analysis, act as a decisive accelerator for the admission of the first wave of Central Europeans into NATO.

Another factor that, undoubtedly, helped to clarify the points of view is the change in Moscow's hitherto uncompromisingly negative stance on NATO enlargement. It seems that, even in Russia, the number of people to whom it is clear that it is simply impossible to hang on to all of the USSR's former vassals is slowly increasing. That is, it is better not to apportion its efforts, but to focus on the countries that have traditional ties to Moscow and are strategically more important to it.

It is good that this time they are not talking "about us without us," and it is even better that this message was delivered just before Christopher's visit to Russia. We will wait and see how audible it is in Moscow tomorrow after the U.S. secretary of state's talks with the Russian elite.

Czech Republic: Havel on Meeting With Polish President

LD2403194996 Prague Radiozurnal Radio Network in Czech 1315 GMT 24 Mar 96

[Interview with Czech President Vaclav Havel by Robert Tamchyna at Lany presidential residence; date not given—recorded; from the "Conversations at Lany" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Tamchyna] Last week you met Polish President Kwasniewski. I assume that your talks concentrated on security issues in Central Europe.

[Havel] These issues were the main subject of our official talks, but we also had lunch together and held less official talks, during which I strove to get to know President Kwasniewski better, to learn his way of thinking and his personality. [passage omitted]

My impressions from his visit are very good. I got to know President Kwasniewski as a young man full of energy, who has a sense of humor, a dynamic and pragmatic man and, to a certain extent, probably a healthily ambitious man. He seems to belong to the generation of younger politicians whose everyday political work brings to life the ideas formulated by politicians who used to lead resistance against the totalitarian communist regime. I think he belongs to the postrevolution generation of politicians, the generation that is, after all, taking over or will soon be taking over also in our country. This is not linked to their political orientation, their party affiliation, or their political attitudes. It seems to be a generation issue.

[Tamchyna] The United States might find it more difficult to win the peace than the Cold War, you said after your talks with U.S. Secretary of State Christopher. [passage omitted]

[Havel] Yes, I used this sentence in my talks with Secretary of State Christopher and during my latest meeting with U.S. President Clinton.

In our interlinked global world, we are facing a great challenge to think through a new world order, and through the method of coexistence between various nations, cultures, regional communities, and international organizations. I really think this challenge has emerged not only because of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the bipolar division of the world between the two powers, but also because of a number of other civilization phenomena characteristic of the end of the 20th century. The task goes far beyond tackling the issue of whether and when we will be accepted into NATO.

It is a big task, and on all my visits abroad I am aware of its pressing nature. It is natural that the United States, as the strongest democratic power, should play a decisive role in coping with this task. I stress this frequently, above all during my visits to the United States, during my talks there on various levels because an isolationist way of thinking has begun to emerge bit by bit in the United States, as happens now and then. People give the impression of thinking: We won the Cold War, we dealt with it, no longer there is any danger of communist expansion, so we can concentrate on ourselves, devote ourselves to our affairs exclusively and avoid getting too involved in world affairs.

This isolationism has a certain tradition in the United States. It has never paid off for the United States, and, whenever the United States was too withdrawn regarding international political issues, in the end it was drawn in anyway and ended up paying a much higher price for it than it would have done had it been involved from the very beginning.

This is why I welcome the policy of President Clinton's current administration, which seems, in my view, to be taking into account the wider responsibility of the United States and acting accordingly, frequently against the opposition from some members of Congress, public opinion, and some of the media.

I have told Secretary of State Christopher that I feel great respect for and very much appreciate the ability of the current U.S. Administration to look further into the future and take into account the challenges of our times. [passage omitted]

Czech Republic: Army Leaning Toward Leasing F-16 Fighters

AU2203183696 Prague MLADA FRONTA DNES in Czech 21 Mar 96 p 2

[Article by "(gag)": "The Army Would Only Lease the U.S. Aircraft at First"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prague—If the Defense Ministry decides to purchase U.S. F-16 fighters, as recommended by the joint Czech-U.S. commission of experts, the Air Force's modernization will go ahead in several phases. In the first one, the Army would, as early as next year, lease from the Americans seven of the older unmodernized F-16A aircraft for about 2 billion korunas [Kc] over a period of five years. Training for the pilots and ground personnel would be included in the price.

Later on, the Army would purchase 18 already modernized F-16A or F-16B fighters for Kc5-6 billion. It envisages purchasing another 18 aircraft only after the year 2007. At the same time, the Americans will be able to deliver the first modernized F-16 fighters, whose quality equals the world standard, to the Army in 1998—that is, when AERO Vodochody begins serial production of the L-159 ground-attack aircraft.

The experts think that Chief of General Staff Jiri Nekvasil has, in essence, given up the controversial plan to modernize the MiG-21 fighters, with which even the Chamber of Deputies' Security Committee disagrees. The third option—not doing anything with the Air Force—was scratched by Defense Minister Vilem Holan immediately after his return from the United States. "On the contrary, it is necessary to do something very quickly with the degenerating Air Force, and I will do everything within my power within government to make sure of this," said Holan. In purchasing the U.S. aircraft, the minister is counting on short-term assistance consisting of an advantageous price, a repayment schedule, and help with pilot training.

Slovakia: Poll: 'Nearly One-Half' Against Joining NATO

LD2303172296 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1531 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prague, Mar. 23 (TANJUG)—Nearly one-half of Slovaks believe their country should remain outside of NATO, and 34 percent favor admission to the alliance, said a poll conducted by the Slovakian Statistics Bureau.

According to the poll, conducted last month, about five percent of the pollees said they were in favor of alliance with Russia, while 14 percent had no stand on the issue.

In a poll conducted in January, asked whether Slovakia should enter NATO, 43 percent answered in the affirmative and 33 percent in the negative. The rest were undecided.

Both polls indicate that popular sentiment is in contradiction to increased efforts by Slovakian politicians to procure Slovakia's admission to NATO.

Slovakia: Meciar Unanimously Reelected Party Chairman

LD2403133896 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1300 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The delegates attending the Sixth National Assembly of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia [HZDS] in Zvolen [central Slovakia] today elected their top officials.

[Slovak Prime Minister] Vladimir Meciar was reelected chairman and those reelected HZDS deputy chairmen were [Deputy Prime Minister] Sergej Kozlik, [Labor Minister] Olga Keltosova, [Slovak Parliament Deputy Speaker] Augustin Marian Huska, and Arpad Matejka. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent Lubomir Krno reports that Vladimir Meciar and Sergej Kozlik gained the votes of all delegates. Olga Keltosova and Arpad Matejka received 200 out of 223 votes, and Augustin Marian Huska mustered 212 votes.

Slovakia: Meciar Calls Christian Democrats 'Militant'

LD2303205396 Bratislava STV 1 Television Network in Slovak 1830 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The sixth congress of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia [HZDS], the strongest political entity in Slovakia, opened in Zvolen today.

[Unidentified correspondent] [passage omitted] The HZDS chairman, Vladimir Meciar [Slovak prime minister], delivered a key speech lasting more than one hour. [passage omitted]

[Begin Meciar recording] [passage omitted] We are witnessing a number of opposition political parties not behaving as opposition political entities, but turning into pressure groups which strive to bring the state and the media under their control. They try to push political parties into the role that used to be played by the former Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Among these groups the Christian Democrats are most strongly orientated towards exercising pressure and seeking confrontation; they are the most militant group in the Slovak political life. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Slovakia: Meciar Comments on Revision of Constitution

LD2403204696 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1700 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The sixth national assembly of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia [HZDS] ended in Zvolen today. [passage omitted] It was decided to extend HZDS officials' term of office to two years and to hold HZDS national assemblies every two years. Our reporter Lubos Krno reports about the deliberations:

[Krno] [passage omitted] At 1500 Vladimir Meciar held a news conference. Answering a question put to him by Radiozurnal about the most important conclusions reached by the sixth assembly, he said the following:

[Begin Meciar recording] [passage omitted] As regards the political sphere, I consider important our appeal addressed to all political parties and the society. Enough polarization, enough confrontation, let us embark on cooperation. If our appeal finds a positive response, we will gladly embark on this path; if a confrontation continues, we are capable of reacting to it though we would not like to take this course of action. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Krno] During the news conference Vladimir Meciar also answered various questions about important political decisions, including a a revision of the entire constitution. In this context, he said the following:

[Begin Meciar recording] We have not discussed changing some articles of the constitution, but a revision of the entire constitution. During our deliberations here, we assessed individual articles of the constitution [word indistinct]. Given the experiences we have made, the revision of the constitution should give us above all an opportunity to ask ourselves what model we want to adhere to—is it a presidential rule or a parliamentary rule or a chancellor's system? These are in substance the (?two) acceptable systems. We need to draw practical conclusions from the current situation in our society, to assess everything. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Krno] Journalists also showed interest in the forthcoming parliamentary deliberations about the Slovak-Hungarian treaty and in the expected result of the vote on 26 March.

[Begin Meciar recording] The result will be overwhelmingly positive [few words indistinct] The treaty will be passed on 26 March; there is no doubt about it. [end recording]

Slovakia: Bill on Administrative Division Approved

LD2203175796 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1700 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lydia Mrazova is now calling from the parliament building.

[Mrazova] I will be very brief. Two minutes ago, parliament approved the government-sponsored draft bill of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the new territorial and administrative division of the Slovak Republic. Just a note to say that the number of the originally proposed 74 districts [okres] was increased by the addition of new districts of Banska Stiavnica, Medzilaborce, and four districts within the town of Kosice.

The parliamentary session will be resumed on 26 March.

Slovakia: HZDS Prepares Changes to Electoral System

AU2203183196 Bratislava PRAVDA in Slovak 21 Mar 96 p 2

[Article by "ns": "HZDS Deputies Want To Meet With Reporters Regularly"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bratislava—After the more than 18 months since the elections ended, the HZDS [Movement for a Democratic Slovakia] Deputies' Club has decided to organize regular press briefings, always before the beginning of parliament sessions. This was announced by club chairman Tibor Cabaj, with the observation that they recommend that their coalition partners, the Association of Workers of Slovakia and the Slovak National Party, take similar steps. To PRAVDA's question as to what the reason is for the change in the attitude of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia toward the media, Cabaj said that it is not a matter of changing stands. They arrived at this decision during an evaluation of one year of operation of the club.

Regarding ratification of the international treaty with Hungary, he confirmed that the deputies of the government coalition will support this document. The expansion of OKO [Special Control Body of the National Council of the Slovak Republic] to include representatives of the opposition remai[illegible]n open question, according to him, which could b[illegible]ected by the adoption of a new order of procedure. To our question of whether the HZDS is preparing a change in the electoral system, he said that such a proposal is in the legislative plan of the government tasks for this year. As he said, it will be a "proportional representation, majority, or combined" system. The amendment to the Penal Code was commented on by P. Brnak, who said that the HZDS does not object to such proposals for change that would not change the basis of the amendment.

[Bratislava SME in Slovak on 21 March on page 3 in a similar report adds: "The government bill on elections is planned for September" and "Interior Ministry staff are working on it now."]

Hungary: Editorial Assesses Christopher's NATO Speech

AU2203162296 Budapest MAGYAR HIRLAP in Hungarian 22 Mar 96 p 7

[Editorial by Bela Dajka: "Christopher's Vision"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Warren Christopher's speech in Prague has not advanced the issue of NATO expansion. However, confirming that the eastern expansion of NATO's defense wing is advancing according to plans seems promising. The U.S. secretary of state succeeded in reassuring his eastern and western European colleagues that NATO is firmly devoted to expansion.

Of course, there are conditions to membership, and Christopher stressed the political elements of these conditions. These stipulate that the candidates' democratic level of development, their relations with their neighbors, the results achieved in market reforms, and the situation of human and minority rights, rather than top-level military technology, will be the decisive factors in accepting new members.

Warren Christopher outlined the vision of a united Europe in which stability is created by democratic development, the final disappearance of Cold War boundaries, U.S. presence, and cooperation with the East (e.g. Russia).

However, such a Europe seems very remote today—not only because Moscow opposes NATO expansion and the upcoming presidential elections augur an uncertain Russia. Convincing the countries that might not make it in the first round of NATO expansion could also be a problem. If NATO decides in December to accept just Poland, the Czech Lands, and Hungary in the first round, it will have to make Slovakia, Romania, and the Baltic states understand the reason for this decision. Otherwise, there is a danger of new dividing lines emerging, lines that could also lead to tension points. And it is the responsibility of the West to avoid this.

Hungary: Impact of U.S. Troops on Taszar Area Viewed

96CH0043A Budapest DEMOKRATA in Hungarian 25 Jan 96 pp 8-13

[Unattributed article: "America Is Here but Entrepreneurs Are Not 'Making Hay' for the Time Being"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is great indignation in Taszar. A BBC television crew had been here to interview local residents about the rapid buildup of the American base and about the Americans' reception. Not many people had been willing to be interviewed. In the end, the BBC crew drifted into a pub, focused its camera on a rather inebriated local resident, who expressed his feelings toward the Americans with a rude gesture in international sign language. Naturally, the clip was included in the telecast.

Mrs. Jozsef Novogradecz, the village's district clerk, also belongs among the indignant villagers, already by virtue of her office. She objects to the BBC's indifferent reporting, to the fact that the world is forming an opinion of this small Somogy County village solely on the basis of that ominous gesture. She would have preferred to show the TV crew the local school, for instance. The school's well-equipped language laboratory has been functioning since 1990. Or she would have shown the crew Taszar's 500-square meter covered stadium. Moreover, a brief report is unable to convey the mood prevailing in the village, the residents' often conflicting views. Matters here are far more complicated than that.

Incidentally, the village does not find the present situation very unusual. The first airport had been built in Taszar in 1929. Of course, it had been just a small civilian one. Military aircraft had landed in Taszar only during World War II. First the planes of the Luftwaffe had used the airport; and later, as the front lines shifted, the planes of the Soviet Air Force.

The present runway was built in the 1950's, by conscripts performing compulsory labor service. Since then, this has been an air base of the Hungarian Air Force. Naturally, the troops stationed temporarily in our country also used the base during military exercises and for large-scale air transport operations.

Actually, Taszar's biggest problem at present is that, in the 1950's, it became literally a military village. A large proportion of the area belongs to the Hungarian Defense Forces. And now that the Americans are here, the shortage of building lots and empty space means that the local government is unable to start investment projects. Anyhow, it must be admitted, the village would be hard pressed to find money for them.

Yet there is considerable interest. Mrs. Jozsef Novogradecz, the district clerk, receives dozens of phone calls every day: entrepreneurs are inquiring from practically every corner of the country. What Taszar needs most in the present situation would be some sort of hotel or inn and a fast-food buffet. But the district clerk would gladly advise entrepreneurs to open also a car rental service.

The local government in Taszar realizes that it will be unavoidable to plan a system of new businesses in the village, for it is absurd that the only thing practically everyone wants to open is a lunchroom or a place of entertainment. But entrepreneurs are still in the stage of inquiries. They are hesitant, confused by the fact that the troops are still confined to base, and by the circulating rumors that the Americans will be in Taszar for only a year.

It is now beginning to dawn on local residents that they do not really know the Americans, despite the countless [American] motion pictures. There is great uncertainty also at the Szechenyi Road grocery in Taszar. The store wants to get ready to serve its new customers but does not know what will be in demand, what the Americans will like, and what will be worth displaying to them on the counter. To make matters worse for the grocery, a large supermarket is being built on the base at an accelerated pace. There the troops stationed in Taszar will be able to buy all kinds of merchandise from home.

According to the villagers, only those of them have been lucky who managed to get jobs with the Americans. Admittedly, those villagers have to work 10 to 12 hours a day, but for above-average wages, and they are being treated much better than workers are usually treated by Hungarian employers. Fabulous amounts are being uttered to and fro, amounts that ordinary mortals can only dream of. According to the Kaposvar Labor Office, the hourly wage rates are 198 forints [Ft] for unskilled workers, between Ft300-350 for skilled workers, and Ft600 for truck drivers.

In Taszar there are also many people who have incurred losses due to the presence of American troops. Water mains under the roads have ruptured at two locations. The pavement has been ruined at many places. The village's road network was not designed for the huge American transport vehicles. The load limit for the village roads in 10 metric tons; but a trailer carrying an Abrams tank weighs more than 100-120 metric tons. The local government has assigned the U.S. Army a dirt road that bypasses the village, but it could not be used up to now because of the deep mud and bad weather conditions.

But, according to the plans, this road will be topped with a heavy-duty asphalt surface as soon as possible, and then it will be the only road the military convoys will be using in future. The heavy vehicles have also caused cracks in the walls of several homes in Taszar. Mrs. Jozsef Novogradecz, the district clerk, estimates that the total damage the village has suffered so far is about Ft60 million.

The Americans are promising to pay for all the damages, and Hungarian insurers are also paying.

The situation is eerily similar to the one when NATO exercises were held in West Germany, back in the 1970's. There, too, similar consequences resulted from the movement of the tanks and their trailers. There, too, high-level agreements were concluded on paying compensation for the damages.

Specifically, that high level is what bothers several Taszar residents. The village did not see much of Bill Clinton during his famous visit, but it did learn about the agreement concluded over their heads. Accordingly, talks on compensation for damages will be between the U.S. Defense Department and Hungary's Ministry of Defense, rather than between the local government and the command of the American troops stationed here. In the opinion of many Taszar residents, this level of the negotiations is unwarrantedly high and will defer settlement into the distant future.

To the knowledge of the commander of the local police station, the Americans are buying forints at a rate of between Ft80-100 per dollar, even though the base's newspaper has informed them of the official rates of exchange. According to unofficial sources of information, another kind of trading has also started in the nearby villages: the Americans are paying $10 for a liter of homemade wine, and $12 for a liter of bootlegged brandy. The commander of the local police station will, as they say, neither confirm nor deny these rumors.

Taszar constitutes the center of the American base. This is where the American command that directs the further movement of the troops is garrisoned. The military transports that fly in troops and equipment land at the Taszar air base, and this is where the military trains dispatched from Germany arrive and are unloaded. The C-130 transports land with about 300 to 400 metric tons of cargo and are unloaded within 15 minutes. The pilots do not even turn off the engines, because it would cost more to restart and warm up the engines than to keep them running. It is estimated that about a tenth of the American troops being sent to Bosnia have passed through Taszar.

Kaposvar is playing a secondary role in the establishment of American facilities. Mostly large depots and other service units are being located in this city of 80,000 residents. Local residents felt initially that America had literally arrived. Kaposvar entrepreneurs were anticipating a degree of prosperity that would simply lift them out from among the ranks of the country's small and medium-sized businesses. Some entrepreneurs were already planning in which part of the country to invest the thousands of dollars they were about to earn.

In contrast to this ebullient optimism, things are rather quiet in Kaposvar at present. For instance, the firms and plants that were hoping to become U.S. Army suppliers were embittered to learn that the Brown &

Root Company of Houston specializes in supplying the U.S. Armed Forces and accompanies the troops even to far corners of the world.

The dream of "making hay" has gone down the drain, and several alarming rumors have been launched to boot. For instance, that the U.S. Army has refused to accept the products of the Kaposvar meat packing plant, because they fail to meet the Army's strict specification. That is entirely false; the Kaposvar plant had also been supplying in the past canned hams for the American troops stationed in Germany.

The few entrepreneurs who have managed nevertheless to enter the Taszar paradise are at present only in the fourth or fifth echelon of suppliers and employed firms. But they might advance higher. Namely, the Americans have not tested any of Hungary's staple foods and food-industry products. Actually, they are still in the process of gathering information on what they could use from the supply available in Hungary.

To speed up this process, the Kaposvar entrepreneurs organized a show of their products for the Americans' benefit, in the city's sports stadium. Several of the entrepreneurs are looking to the municipal government, knowing that it had designated an official to liaise with the Americans. The entrepreneurs also know that a coordinating committee, briefly referred to as the defense council, is already functioning. There are also American officers on this committee. The entrepreneurs expect that the question of supplying the U.S. Army will be raised in this committee, if nowhere else.

Also in Kaposvar, just as in Taszar, prices have become a key issue. But the city is far ahead in this respect. There are restaurants that have exactly doubled their prices, so as to keep to a minimum the numbers of their Hungarian customers. Some people regard the higher prices as a greater evil than anything else. Greater, for instance, than the risk that, in their opinion, cooperation involves. A retired teacher has warned that, in modern military conflicts, supply centers are equal to combat troops in their importance as military targets.

The city was bound to assume a certain military character of sorts: Army-green vehicles are driving on its streets, and helicopters are whirling overhead. The noise of the helicopters caused disruption in several of the schools: the teachers were unable to make themselves heard above the noise. Naturally, the American command took immediate action as soon as it received the first complaints: it ordered the helicopters to fly north and bypass the city.

There are a few people who consistently use the word *occupation* to describe the Americans' presence. They claim that the modest Soviet Army has never let loose anywhere so many of its servicemen on the civilian population as the Americans are planning to do.

"They are settling in on us," emphatically says a mechanic aged about 50.

But a college student is of the opinion that we should let them settle in.

"For us this will be the entrance hall to NATO membership. And we need NATO. Every Hungarian of sound mind who has followed the recent elections in Moscow knows this."

The hotel industry is not interested in world politics and is already enjoying the blessings stemming from the presence of the U.S. Armed Forces. The places of entertainment and bars are still awaiting the troops whom, it is rumored, the command will allow to leave the base on passes, after 1 February.

As to what will happen then? Good heavens! Many places of entertainment have strived to stage more explicit shows. There are a lot of new girls in the city, and many of them speak Ukrainian. Yet the market for sensual pleasures is in a slump. There is complete mistrust in this area. Kaposvar residents fear that the Americans are bringing AIDS into the city. And the Americans on their part fear being infected with HIV specifically here.

Even among the sex market's players, few people are aware of the surprising large number of young women in this army. Their proportion within the entire U.S. Armed Forces reaches 13 percent overall, but at the Taszar and Kaposvar base it may be as high as 25 or 30 percent, since this is a supply center.

It is difficult to predict exactly how large the dollar-backed demand will be that the Americans represent. Contrasting figures are circulating on the strength of the troops stationed here. There are newspaper reports that mention a force between 6,000 and 6,500 strong. But, in the opinion of the locals, this figure includes also the contingent that will move on. According to official sources, a force of between 3,000 and 3,500 will remain in Taszar once the deployment in Bosnia will have been completed.

Another uncertainty concerns the number of servicemen who will be allowed to leave the barracks, and under what conditions. For it is being rumored that the U.S. Supreme Command had declared Hungary—or more accurately, the base and its area—a war zone, rather than a base of operations.

And the guessing continues in Kaposvar: What will be the end of this? Or as the entrepreneurs are putting it:

Who will be making hay here? According to the deputy municipal clerk, somebody is bound to. But it certainly will not be Kaposvar.

[Box, p 9]

Mrs. Istvan Bajsz, Bar Owner: Whiskey and Dollars

"For the time being, the Americans are very discreet and relaxed about visiting night clubs. Things will remain like this until the servicemen are allowed off base. Mostly officers and civilian employees working for the military visit our Belvarosi Bar now, and they drink mainly whiskey or beer. They are quiet and polite, sip their drinks, and listen to the music. They have not caused any significant disruption in our lives. The only change at the Belvarosi is that we now stock 12 kinds of whiskey, instead of the six we had earlier. But we already foresee the wild competition that is about to break out very soon. Now, practically every entrepreneur in Kaposvar is planning to open a bar or a late-night pub.

"Although the troops are still languishing on base, prices have already begun to skyrocket. And not just at places of entertainment, but also wherever prices are denominated in dollars."

[Box, p 12]

Jozsef Vincze, Taszar Resident: A Polite Army

"Due to the American heavy vehicles and the convoys that are starting off, teaching is difficult in the school on Szechenyi Road. And one is often awakened at night. One Taszar resident counted 1000 vehicles driving by his window during a single night. But certain fears have proved unfounded. For instance, I would begin by saying that the Americans are not speeding in Taszar. In fact, they drive very carefully, stop at intersections and let the pedestrians cross. One is able to learn a lot not just from their politeness, but from their lifestyle as well. Since the Americans have arrived, every morning the village is full of young joggers dressed in sweat suits. Moreover, you simply cannot beat them in exchanging greetings. It looks as if they were under orders to greet us first. I realize this is not much consolation for the crack in the wall of your house. But they walk the village, stop to inquire and to investigate every complaint."

[Box, p 13]

Janos Szello, Kaposvar Labor Office Manager: There Is Work but...

"In Kaposvar and its outskirts, we had 5,400 jobless persons on record before the Americans arrived. The Brown & Root Company of Houston, which supplies the troops, immediately told us that about 2,000 workers would be needed, for a variety of jobs. The company was interested primarily in craftsmen in such shortage crafts as carpenters and building joiners, for instance. Meanwhile, Brown & Root realized that it had misjudged the skills of Hungarian labor. A Hungarian plumber, for example, is able to install not just the pipes, but also the washbasins and faucets. Interestingly, that is something the Americans were not used to. In the end, they employed between 800 and 900 persons, with the help of our preliminary screening and placement. The process has not ended, although it has slowed down considerably, and emphasis has now shifted to other skills. We are placing between 20 and 30 persons a week with the Americans, mostly cleaning women. Let there be no misunderstanding: paradise has not yet arrived, and there is no spectacular decline in the number of unemployed persons in the city and its environs. But at least the unemployment rate has stopped its rise."

Hungary: Horn Upbeat About Economic Developments

LD2303185696 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1700 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Gyula Horn believes the key issue of 1996 is whether inflation can be kept within the planned limits. Gyula Horn spoke in the radio program "16 Hours."

[Begin Horn recording] One of the key issues of 1996 is to keep inflation within the planned limits. It is also a definite intention of the government that no kind of real wage decline should take place from 1997, beginning in 1997, or in 1998 at the latest. On the basis of all we can achieve and have achieved with stabilization, the increase of real wages, and an improvement of the standard of living, which will be tangible even if not dramatic, will begin. [end recording]

The prime minister is certain that the government can fulfill the conditions necessary for the IMF standby loan, and that the budget law will also be carried out.

[Begin Horn recording] We have set as a target for 1996 that the budget deficit will be approximately 4 percent of the GDP. The results of the first two months show that the deficit did not grow, on the contrary an improvement has begun. I very much hope that this will become permanent in the coming months. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Gyula Horn also said that he was not happy when Jozsef Torgyan, chairman of the opposition Independent Smallholders' Party, called on him to resign several times on 14 March, under his office in parliament.

[Begin Horn recording] I am not happy about this, because it will not bring results, or possibly only bad ones. In the difficult situation the country is at the moment, one should not incite people's emotions and set demands that cannot be met or have no foundation whatsoever. The international response to this is not good either. What is promising, however, is that as far as I know a great majority, possibly a deciding majority of the population does not sympathize with such manifestations. [end recording]

Hungary: Trade Minister Confirms OECD Membership

LD2203191596 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1700 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been confirmed in Paris that Hungary will become the 27th OECD member next week. The industry and trade minister [Imre Dunai] has said that Hungary will benefit from membership. Eva Vajda reports:

[Vajda] At a press briefing in Budapest, Imre Dunai said that Hungary will pay $300,000 as membership fee this year and in return it expects effective help with the transformation of the economy. OECD membership means, among other things, that Hungary can get loans at lower interest rates. The membership is very significant for starting talks on our EU entry as soon as possible, the minister of industry stressed.

The OECD has three serious expectations from Hungary: steady economic growth should begin, the balance of payments should improve, and inflation should slow down.

Hungary: 1996 Tax Increase Effects Weighed

96CH0047B Budapest 168 ORA in Hungarian 23 Jan 96 pp 34-35

[Unattributed article: "A Year of Tax Shocks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bokros finds it too high, and Bekesi considers if professionally indefensible and of a populist bent. It almost led to a crisis in the coalition, and the smaller government party did not even vote for it. All to no avail. The highest rate of personal income tax was raised from 44 percent to 48 percent. The personal income tax increase for 1996 has a good chance of being included in the book of superlatives, at least here, in Hungary. Never have there been so many tax tables published, and it is conceivable that never have so many been prepared. Of course, this is not such a big deal: With an appropriate number of computer programs, the number of variations is huge. The Finance Ministry is supposed to have simulated 500 tax tables. Four of them were published one day, and another two a week later, and to be completely sure, the smaller party of the coalition also prepared one, and of course the bargaining in the Arbitration Council also shaped it.

Many people believe that such a high tax rate has never existed in the history of Hungarian income tax. This is a mistake: When the tax system was introduced, there was a rate above 50 percent. Of course this is not an argument for the feasibility of such a rate now. Experts almost unanimously claim that a rate close to 50 percent, to boot, in the middle income category, can lead to the growth of a shadow economy at a time when the government set curbing the shadow economy as a goal. It was no accident when Finance Minister Bokros hastily stated that he did not like the new tax table either, but at least this way everyone could see where any further delay of a budget reform could lead. The finance minister considers the present solution temporary, and promises tax reform and the reduction of the highest tax rate next year.

Actually, no year passes without a—sometimes significant—modification of the tax system. If nothing else, at least rates are redrawn or deductions are curtailed. This time both occurred. Contributions to the employment trust can no longer be deducted from taxable personal income, and credits for retirement fund contributions and health insurance costs were eliminated. The zero-rate income bracket disappeared, that is to say, income is taxable from the first forint [Ft]. At the same time, because of the elimination of the zero rate, wages and salaries are compensated for by a tax credit. Thus, someone with income from wages and salaries only pays less tax than someone with other types of income, as well. Even if the additional income is only Ft1, the individual fares badly. On the one hand, the computation of tax will become extremely complicated, on the other hand, he will be subject to more tax, a portion of which can be refunded in the following year, but until then, the tax office will use the taxpayers' money.

Laszlo Bekesi considers the employment of two different kinds of tax tables for self-employed people and people who earn wages and salaries completely erroneous. As he told VILAGGAZDASAG earlier, the discriminative taxation of self-employment income was abolished from the tax system in 1986. At that time, that was a great achievement. Of course, Bekesi cannot support the reintroduction of this system ten years later. Others suggest an appeal to the Constitutional Court because of the discriminatory differentiation of income.

In the accepted tax table, in the income bracket of 300-800,000, the tax rate is lower than earlier. The majority of employees belong to this bracket. The acceptance of a 48-percent tax rate can be attributed to the trade unions. At the Interest Reconciliation Council, the employers protested Lajos Bokros's 48-percent suggestion because, even if he found it too much, he was the one who proposed it, but the trade unions supported it. "The contributions applied to high income have reached a level which could be called abnormal," said Istvan Orban, president of the Association of Employers, formulating the position of employers. In his opinion, the new tax table will indirectly lead to a wage war at the workplace.

The tax increase was also beset with a coalition dispute. At the vote in Parliament, the Free Democrats did not even vote for the bill, and for this reason the larger government party accused them of violating the coalition agreement. But the Socialists, with just a few exceptions, supported it almost completely. According to Laszlo Keller, the Socialist vice chairman of the budget committee, the higher tax rate would only make itself felt above a yearly income of Ft1.7 million. And few people belong to that group.

[Box, p 34]

Major Changes in the Tax Code

—Contributions to employee trust cannot be deducted from the taxable income.

—Last year's tax credit for retirement contributions and health insurance contributions are eliminated.

—The detailed regulations concerning investment tax credit are tightened.

—Ft2000 of the meal allowance provided by the employer is not taxable.

—Private persons can determine the use of 1 percent of their personal income tax (it can be offered for public causes, and the related procedures and the group of beneficiaries will be regulated by a separate law).

—Self-employed entrepreneurs can reduce their income by Ft3,000 a month by training vocational students based on an agreement with a vocational school or a training contract with a student, or by employing an individual who is at least 50 percent disabled.

—As of January, small businessmen can use not only interest on their investment loans, but also interest on loans for financing current assets, to reduce their taxable income by an amount up to 25 percent of the interest on the loan taken out in the current tax year.

—Income from the sale of property—which can be reduced by a credit for housing—will be burdened by a 10-percent withholding tax.

—In foreign assignments, the amount of foreign currency allotment which firms can pay is not limited; 30 percent of the per diem expenses are tax-free, but only $10, if the length of the foreign assignment is less than 90 days. After 91 days, the tax-free portion is $13, with an additional $3 per person for dependents—spouse, minor children—staying abroad.

Hungary: New Budapest Bank Scandal Probed

96CH0073B Budapest MAGYAR NEMZET in Hungarian 1 Mar 96 pp 1, 5

[Unattributed article: "Budapest Bank—Gyula Horn Has Ordered an Investigation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yet another scandal involving Budapest Bank has erupted recently, Bela Horvath announced at the press conference of the Smallholders' Party. The chief of the party chairman's office outlined the situation as follows: On 19 February, one day after announcing his intention to resign, [Finance Minister] Lajos Bokros gave State Secretary Tibor Draskovics written authority to exercise the minister's rights over the State Development Institute (AFI).

Thereupon the institute, one day before its cessation, purchased Budapest Bank's "vacant and deteriorating building" at 6 Szechenyi Rakpart for nearly 1 billion forints [Ft]. Bela Horvath added that Budapest Bank had been sold cheaply (while receiving between Ft21-22 billion for its consolidation). But the really interesting further development in the chain of events, Horvath said, was that the validity of the property's appraisal had expired in the meantime (on 20 February). A new appraisal, completed within one day, set the property's value 50 percent higher than the first appraisal.

The Hungarian State Treasury is the institute's legal successor. But why, the Smallholders are asking, does the Hungarian state have to pay nearly a billion forints to a foreign private bank? Is it because, at the time of Budapest Bank's privatization, the government had promised the foreign buyer to buy back the real estate at a high premium?

On Thursday, the Ministry of Finance sent MTI [Hungarian News Agency] a statement regarding AFI's purchase of the real estate. In it, the ministry points out that the purchase of the property at 6 Szechenyi Rakpart from Budapest Bank, and the actions preceding the purchase, were profitable and resulted in an increase of net worth.

According to the statement, AFI received Budapest Bank shares totaling Ft2.8 billion at their face value, for its capital contribution in kind—its former headquarters at 5 Deak Ferenc Utca. As its future headquarters, AFI selected the building at 6 Szechenyi Rakpart-12 Academia Utca and signed a letter of intent with Budapest Bank to buy it. The value of the building was appraised last August, at Ft793.284 million on the basis of its depreciated original cost, and at Ft888.171 million according to the return-on-investment principle. Because of delays in finalizing the sale, Budapest Bank had the building reappraised on 15 February. This time the appraiser set the building's market value at Ft1.373 billion, and its sales value at about Ft1 billion. In contrast to this appraisal, AFI in the end bought the building for Ft850 million, which is within the price range set by the first appraisal. With AFI's cessation, the building is being transferred to the Directorate for the Management of State Properties, and its further use will be decided in accordance with the Public Finance Law. According to the Finance Ministry's statement, the property may be suitable for housing the Hungarian State Treasury. The more so because it is next door to the building in which the APEH [Office of Tax and Fiscal Auditing] is located.

In reply to a question put to him at his press conference, the government spokesman said that Prime Minister Gyula Horn has ordered an investigation into the circumstances surrounding this issue.

Hungary: HSP Approves Party's Economic Policy Guidelines

LD2403204096 Budapest MTV Television Network in Hungarian 1800 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The parliamentary group of the Hungarian Socialist Party [HSP] has approved the basic principles of an economic program the party intends to follow in future.

Addressing the meeting, [Prime Minister] Gyula Horn and [HSP deputy] Laszlo Bekesi both agreed that the financial stability achieved so far was fragile and the reform of the financial system of health care, pension system, and education is the basic condition for any progress. According to the HSP parliamentary group, a new tax system should be introduced within a short period.

The basic principles of the economic program approved by the HSP parliamentary group are as follows:

Bank interest rates should be reduced in order to encourage entrepreneurs to invest, but the reduction in interest rates should not lead to an increase in inflation.

While making sure that the revenue of state finances do not drop, a new tax system with more favorable tax rates for citizens should be introduced.

Education and scientific research should be supported.

The condition for the implementation of the economic program is that the system of the state finances should entirely be restructured. [passage omitted]

Hungary: Presidium Prepares for HSP Congress

LD2403201496 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1700 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidium of the Hungarian Socialist Party [HSP] has decided that the HSP will not run in the mock elections to be held in Kaposvar because the rules applied there are not in line with the stipulations of the electoral law.

The only debate at the HSP's last presidium session before the congress—which is to be held at the end of next week—was about the report of the party chairman [Gyula Horn]. Kata Peli Nagy reports from the scene.

[Peli Nagy] Not a word of the party chairman's report has been published. Gyula Horn's speech will be heard at 0900 hours [0800 GMT] on Saturday [30 March], on the second day of the congress, at the earliest. According to our information, the presidium discussed only minor changes to the speech.

Contrary to the original text, the speech is likely to deal with plans for the reform of state finances and relations with the government coalition partner [Alliance of Free Democrats, SZDSZ] in more detail.

According to Executive Chairman Sandor Csintalan, what is at stake at the congress is whether or not a high performance team can be set up and the bodies receive the political support necessary to lay the foundation for the government's work for the next years.

Csintalan confirmed that he, personally, did not support the creation of the post of general deputy chairman [altalanos elnoekhelyettes], which would replace the post of executive chairman [uegyvezetoe alelnoek], that is to say, his own post. If the congress creates this post, Csintalan will not run for it, but if there is no change, he will face the challenge.

Following the briefing, the proposal for the amendment to the basic statutes was handed to the press. This is the final version which is to be submitted to the congress. This document includes a proposal for a deputy chairman post instead of the executive chairman post, and three vice-chairman [alelnoek] posts instead of four, and the reduction of the number of presidium members by four.

The new candidates will finally be selected by a preparatory committee on Tuesday; the names of candidates will only be revealed after this.

It also turned out at the press briefing that Vilmos Fedor, about whom it had been said that he would like to be nominated to the presidium, did not want any post at all.

Hungary: Message Behind Rallies of FKGP, MIEP

AU2203214296 Budapest HETI VILAGGAZDASAG in Hungarian 23 Mar 96 pp 108, 113-114

[Article by Florian Mezes: "15 March '96—Enemy-Image Black Magic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The steady boredom of the state-organized events and the rudeness sometimes expressed in the tone of opposition demonstration speeches characterized 15 March 1996. One thing became certain: The anniversary of the first day of the 1848-49 revolution will not be a joint event for a long time to come because today the parties and other mass organizations of different beliefs and world views "celebrate" separately, and there is a growing effort to split the politically united nation into ethnic groups.

"The crowd chanted the slogan 'Freedom! Democracy!' for a long time," MAGYAR NEMZET wrote on 16 March 1989 about the 15 March event of the then (from the state party) independent organizations in front of Parliament. "Liberal worms" are chewing at the nation's body from the inside, and "liberal vultures" from the outside, Independent Smallholders Party [FKGP] chief Jozsef Torgayn howled into the microphone to the crowds at the rally organized on 14 March of this year; "Rat, rat," the crowd chanted a day later at the mass event of the Hungarian Justice and Life Party [MIEP] whenever MIEP leader Istvan Csurka uttered the names of President Arpad Goncz, Prime Minister Gyula Horn, or Alliance of Free Democrats [SZDSZ] Chairman Ivan Peto. Only seven years have gone by between the two dates, and the deterioration in the style, which was then still full of pathos, into vulgarity is a good indication—even if only on the surface—of the current state of Hungary's 1989-90 quiet revolution.

"The revolution has failed," philosopher Miklos Gaspar Tamas said in a 16 March evening television debate. He based this statement on the fact that various groups of the nation that are ethnically, culturally, or in any other way different from each other, can no longer rise above these differences as they did in the revolutionary atmosphere of 1989. In other words, 1989-90 did not manage to make Hungary's citizens—who are rather diverse as regards their nationality, world view, and culture—into a lastingly united political nation. This year's 15 March proved that, at least from the extreme right, several people are now openly advocating the very strong goal of differentiating between Hungarian and non-Hungarian, this kind of Hungarian and that kind of Hungarian.

For example, both in March and in October 1995, Csurka "coded" his message when he spoke about activities against Hungary carried out by the international bank plutocracy which gobbles up the country and expropriates Hungarian culture. In front of such a large audience, this year was the first time that he identified this as an international plot directed from New York (!?) for Jewish interests. (When explaining this, he was obviously not disturbed by the fact that he often used images and references from the Old Testament.) Torgyan had not gone as far as this before, either, in throwing abuse at the liberals, and especially in threatening the not yet precisely defined "aliens to the nation." It is hard to know if the two "nation saviors" are trying to outdo each other (Csurka also had a period of "aliens to the nation"), if they have become captive to their own rhetoric (they always have to produce something new compared to their previous performances), or they truly believe that they can lure the votes of masses with their gradually more and more radical and racist speeches.

Anyway, the competition started when they announced their events: The MIEP indicated 130,000 people, and the FKGP 100,000 people to the Interior Ministry. In the end, the FKGP proved to be more successful, because some 50-60,000 people may have turned up there, and the MIEP demonstration had 20-30,000. The ritual and choreography of luring the masses is also an area of competition, and both domestic extreme right radicals appear to be rather ambitious in this. This year, for example, the MIEP leadership dressed in traditional Hungarian peasant colors, namely uniformly somber black clothes and, producing a kind of performance, they made the reading of the theses calling for civil disobedience more colorful by using various people—this supplemented the usual folk song and recital performances. Torgyan's stage masters now reached back to ancient cult traditions, supplementing the also usual FKGP act of folksongs and recitals with puppets personifying the prime minister and the SZDSZ leader.

The show is visibly an important element of the fact that the two party chiefs' performances now always attract tens of thousands of people. Naturally, other 15 March events also had shows, for example, the state—official, central—celebration at the National Museum. However, it seems that here the show was for its own sake; as long as the hot dogs lasted, a few thousand people also stayed, but then, in groups of hundreds, the crowd started to leave the program, which eerily resembled the liturgy of the revolutionary youth days, the children's choir showing victory with two hands while saying "We swear!" [refrain from 15 March 1848 poem], and the scene of umbrellas arranged in red, white, and green [national colors] stripes intending to evoke 15 March 1848. Over here, the production was directly based on those present, namely on their emotions imbedded in their current lives, rather than on their patriotism rooted in an historical conscience.

The apparent, outward signs hide a very consciously created range of means for influencing the masses. Dressing in mourning was clearly meant to express concern over the fate of the nation—or, more precisely, of "Hungarians"—and the cult message of the puppets is nothing other than what it used to be, in the ancient period of the world's several peoples: Keeping evil, the devil, away precisely through its very representation. These outward appearances are also meant to express that the speaker and his audience belong together, they are associates—in the sense at least that their fate and their enemies are the same. From this point of view, it does not really matter if the enemy is precisely defined (by the MIEP) or not (by the FKGP). It is also part of the same when Torgyan refers to Hungary's split by Trianon; according to a 1983 survey, 63 percent of the domestic intelligentsia considered the redrawing of the status quo by Trianon—by the superpowers, ignoring the ethnic boundaries—"improper," and in 1989 this figure was 83 percent. It is therefore likely that the majority of the population holds the same view. However, border revision is not mentioned at all by Torgyan; this would probably divide the opinions more. Trianon is only used as a catchword to evoke emotional effects.

However, the enemy-image black magic—and even the naming of the "enemy"—could not be effective if it were not based on social tensions, impoverishment effecting the whole of society, and the ever-deteriorating general mood in society. Both Csurka and Torgyan must be aware of this truism, because in their speeches, too, the "enemy" is an enemy because it is the cause of all social—in Csurka's case, Hungarian—troubles, but the fact that Hungarian society and most of its strata are in crisis and in a bad situation is the most important element of their rhetoric, and this actually can be verified because it is true.

It is a question of how long the credibility will last. Csurka had announced his event from 1400 to midnight to the police, but even the last faithful MIEP people went home at around eight in the evening, and the masses, which had still been chanting enthusiastically in the afternoon, more or less dispersed when the "stage act" was finished. The same way, a day earlier, most of the participants went home after the main program was over at the "Farewell to the Government." They took with themselves the MIEP's call for civil disobedience, namely that no one should buy any bus or tram tickets in April (and when the inspector comes, everyone should get off the bus or the tram); no one should pay the electricity bill in May (especially those who otherwise could); and no one should pay the water and gas bill in September ("we pay the amounts saved this way to an account to the benefit of Hungarian education, disadvantaged schools, and school meals"). They also took home with them Torgyan's promises for the event of his getting into government—Hungary will turn into a Canaan, a land of milk and honey, and he will announce amnesty, but "if someone violates it," this person will be punished with death, because he will temporarily introduce the death penalty.

B-H: E. Slavonian Serbs Apologize for Albright Incident

AU2503122596 Beli Manastir Srpski Radio in Serbo-Croatian 1700 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have received a statement issued by the information service of the Srijem-Baranja district executive council. Here is the full version.

We deeply regret the incident at the Vukovar market on 21 March, 1996, when Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Galbraith, U.S. ambassador to Zagreb, and Mr. Klein, UN administrator for the Srijem-Baranja district, visited the Srijem-Baranja district. They were accompanied by a large group of foreign reporters. The information service of the Srijem-Baranja district executive council assessed the potential impact of the visit. The visit attracted a large group of Croatian reporters to Vukovar. UNTAES [UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia] spokesman Douglas (Kofmann) was given a timely warning that their appearance in town would involve a very high risk. Mr. (Kofmann) did not heed the warning. I am convinced that Mrs. Madeleine Albright came here as a friend to help implement the peace process and provide the safety for the population of the Srijem-Baranja district. The visit of a lady diplomat in itself is not enough to provoke a backlash. The seeds of the incident were planted by Croatian reporters, who behaved as if it were their own country. The visit to the Vukovar market would have passed almost unnoticed, had they not addressed the population in the markedly kajkavian dialect [of the Zagreb area] and replied to the question of what they were doing in the district in the first place. [sentence as heard]

We believe that they purposely brought out the logo of Croatian Television to irritate and provoke an incident. And when a Croatian flag unfurled in one of the cars was the last straw. Let us not forget that the Vukovar interior ministry warned the UNTAES security personnel about the possibility of an incident arising from the presence and behavior of a large group of reporters. That warning was also disregarded. We are very sorry about the incident. We are not trying to justify the culprits. Mrs. Albright's visit was a chance to present our position on the implementation of the peace process. We are grateful for her attention and extend our apology. In spite of UNTAES members' high degree of professionalism, we hope that our suggestions and assessment will be taken more into account for future cooperation. All reporters to visit the district in the future must realize that they play a very important role in the implementation of the peace process. Furthermore, we expect that those who cannot suppress their irritating, cynical, and disparaging activities stay away, ends today's statement by the information service of the Srijem-Baranja district executive council.

B-H: Serbs Dispute Albright Evidence on Mass Grave

LD2303154996 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 1212 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sarajevo, 23 Mar (SRNA)—The Information Ministry of the [Bosnian] Serb Republic [RS] wishes to inform the public that during her visit to a farm in Pilica, north of Zvornik, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright found two badly decomposed human corpses, which cannot constitute admissible evidence on the existence of a mass grave.

"The discovery of two corpses in an area of combat operations cannot provide a basis for such momentous conclusions, but and it is being manipulated by the media in order to perpetuate the practice of leveling accusations at the Serbs," the statement said.

The Information Ministry said that Serb Republic President Radovan Karadzic has ordered civilian and military investigators to take all necessary steps to uncover the truth about this case.

A statement forwarded to SRNA said: "President Karadzic has ordered civil and military bodies to appoint experts for a mixed commission charged with investigating war crimes." The statement added:

"The RS agrees that the Implementation Force [IFOR] and the RS Army should jointly guard the area where the two bodies were found in order to preclude the possibility of removing evidence of the possible crime before the establishment of the final truth."

According to the statement, the RS insists that its own experts participate in the investigation of suspicious localities on the territory of the former Bosnia-Herzegovina, and will not accept the findings of commissions which do not include RS representatives.

B-H: Sarajevo Said Yielding Too Much to U.S. Wishes

AU2503121096 Sarajevo SVIJET in Serbo-Croatian 21 Mar 96 p 9

[Article by Vlastimir Mijovic: "The Limits of Indulgence"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Throughout the four-year war crisis, the Bosnian leadership has been the most cooperative [of all parties to the conflict] toward international mediators. In other words, it has mostly yielded under their pressure. An explanation for the cooperativeness can perhaps best be illustrated by Izetbegovic's words addressed from the hospital to the inhabitants of Mostar: "What are we losing? Do we have anything in our hands?" This is what Izetbegovic asked himself when he was driven into a corner and when he was required to agree to a revision of Koschnick's arbitration. The attitude by which Izetbegovic was led when he made his decision in Rome has been present in the Bosnian leadership for a long time already and it will probably be practiced in the future, too. There is the impression that the Sarajevo authorities are being constantly forced to yield and make concessions, constantly to swallow bitter pills. Until a pill comes on which they choke: There are certainly limits up to which cooperativeness can be discussed in a positive sense, but there is a level, however, at which cooperativeness turns into defeatism.

The state leadership assessed that it would not reach that limit if it agreed to yet another personnel sacrifice in political life. This is, naturally, the Alispahic case. Under direct U.S. pressure, the latest minister of internal affairs and one of Alija Izetbegovic's most confident assistants, has been deposed from the position of director of the Agency for Research and Documentation even before he received his first salary as director. At the moment when this article is being written, the fate of the agency itself is uncertain, too: The United States required not only that Bakir Alispahic be removed but that the Agency be abolished as well. Clinton's Administration considers this Agency a danger for the democratic development of Bosnia-Herzegovina, since, in the Administration's opinion, it is pursuing a secret political agenda.

After having sacrificed Safet Orucevic, the recent mayor of Mostar, President Izetbegovic said that the sacrifice of a pawn would lead to the gain of a match. With which chess figure can Alispahic be compared? Ejup Ganic, the president's deputy, did not try to make such metaphors. When Alispahic was replaced, he said laconically: "All the decisions we take are in the interest of Bosnia-Herzegovina." If we translated this into normal language, it would read: The state leadership agrees to make concessions and to give certain things up also in cases when this is required from abroad, by the U.S. dictate in this case, since it considers that it would help everybody in that way.

This is quite logical. Politics is a cycle of gains and losses, of giving and losing. This does not mean, however, that everyone will have the same share in the end. Someone will have a big loss. Those who think that they are preparing a victorious finale by constantly making sacrifices will certainly lose. The balance depends on whether something was sacrificed that was inevitable or on whether an old quality was replaced by the new one.

The state leadership was perhaps really forced to remove Alispahic. It might sacrifice the Agency too. An inevitable question is, however, where this leads. Is Bosnia-Herzegovina not entitled to have an intelligence service of its own? Is such a service not an institutional part of every modern state? Does America, which insists on closing down the Bosnian agency, not have approximately ten such organizations? Does Croatia, which instigated Clinton to require this, not have four secret police services? Bosnia and its state leadership do not have to protect either Alispahic or the Agency for Research and Documentation; they do not have to protect the irregularities that could happen and do happen in the work of such institutions, but Bosnia and its leadership do have to protect the rights of its state to have the services that other states have too. They have to protect their right to decide independently on who will be the head of such services. We are not sure that this basic right is protected today in a dignified and productive way.

We shall often remember Richard Holbrooke, and especially his assessments that the peace agreement was signed in Dayton first of all owing to the yielding attitude of the Bosnian leadership. Now, when the implementation of the peace agreement is seriously endangered, it seems that the implementation process too should be healed by yielding, or more precisely by the defeatism of the Bosnian leadership. Rome is a good example. Alispahic's case is an even better example, and the freezing of all serious contacts with Iran, which is possible, would adequately supplement the list of major concessions. It would probably not round it off, however, since if foreign pressure continuously bears fruit, as is the case with Sarajevo, it can only become bigger. Usually, either culprits or losers of a war are forced to make concessions and bow their heads after the war. Bosnia thinks that it has neither caused nor lost the war. The United States and the Europeans obviously do not share that opinion, at least regarding one of these two aspects.

B-H: U.S. Influence in Balkan Processes Considered

AU2503121696 Sarajevo DNEVNI AVAZ in Serbo-Croatian 10 Mar 96 p 3

[Commentary by Enes Cengic: "The American Seesaw"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Several statements by State Department officials that refer to the Balkans and to the attitude of the United States toward the crisis here, graphically demonstrate the political strategy of the strongest world power, and the way in which its interests are "subtly" imposed in the region.

The "presence of 200 foreign Muslim soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina" is also within the scope of interest of the U.S. Government, and is strongly linked to the arrival of the NATO pact envoy in Sarajevo, but also to the issue of the two Serb soldiers who participated in the crimes of Mladic's forces in Srebrenica, who have been arrested by Milosevic's police.

The insistent pursuit of the allegedly still active "mujahidin" in Bosnia discloses the "hard" side, the side that is negative for the Bosnian policy, of the global American interest, which aspires to the complete negation of any influence by Iran in this region. This interest could be seen as a part of the State Department efforts to combat terrorism in the Middle East, for which the United States always accuses the Iranian authorities.

Bridge Between Civilizations

However, independent of that, Clinton's administration has consistently been conducting such a policy, resulting in Prime Minister Muratovic's justified protest to Ambassador Menzies, because the negative attitude, which has already grown into misinformation of the world public, threatens to inflict huge damage on the efforts of the Bosnian Government to satisfy everybody.

That is, the stories about the presence of Islamic volunteers in Bosnia, when repeated for the 50th time, can be seen as a sort of negative reaction to Muratovic's visit to Iran, but also a sign that some forces do not care at all about any sort of relations between these two countries, meaning that they do not care about Bosnia either, which should be a bridge between states with different political and civilizational code of values.

With the possibility that beside all this the attitude of the United States is also a search for an excuse for some unfulfilled promises in the economic aspect of the implementation of the peace agreement, it is doubtless that the triangle of relations between United States, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iran is still based on the principle that the special envoy Sacirbegovic, in a recent statement, expressed in one sentence: "We will agree not to agree."

So that Bosnian and U.S. officials, when it comes to Iran, will probably go on "agreeing" only to an extent that does not significantly impair the sovereignty of the state diplomacy of Bosnia-Herzegovina in cooperating both with the East and the West.

As for the influence of the United States on the arrival of the NATO envoy and his meeting with the representatives of the Bosnia-Herzegovina authorities, it is certain that this is positive to the same extent as Bosnia-Herzegovina's promise to join the "Partnership for Peace" program seems realistic. On the other hand, it is already completely clear to everybody that the problems of the military implementation of the Dayton Agreement are minor in comparison to the temptations of the civil part.

Therefore, the fact that the NATO Council did not approve an expansion in IFOR's [Implementation Force] authority, and that everything will remain "within the mandate," will by no means support the "sluggish" solution of some crucial issues, like, for example, the return of refugees and the search for missing persons.

How Much Do the Arrested Know?

Underlining the fact that the prosecution of war criminals is also not "within the mandate" brings the visit of NATO's ministers to Sarajevo, in connection with the story on the capturing of two "former" Chetniks who, on their way to The Hague, according to an order issued by Goldstone, ended in the "jaws" of the Serbian police. Obviously, if IFOR will not do it, Milosevic's private army will, for reasons that have little to do with the disclosure of the names of commanders and perpetrators of the horrible crimes in and around Srebrenica.

Analysis of the events in Serbia claim that Milosevic ordered the arrest of Radoslav Kremenovic and Drazen Erdemovic in the first place in order to get to know, faster than Goldstone, how much the two of them actually know, and how high in the hierarchy of political and army leaders Erdemovic was prepared to go in his accusations in The Hague. Besides, there are indications that the media outcry that followed this arrest was also raised for some pragmatic reasons, because it all happened immediately before the announced demonstrations by the opposition on 9 March.

In any case, the United States has reacted very openly this time, and made it clear to the Serbian authorities that they had to extradite the arrested to the War Crimes Tribunal straight away, which should force Belgrade to start cooperating with The Hague.

In that way, the strongest world power—by pressure on several sides, demanding concessions, and not allowing compromises when it comes to its vital interests—is trying to influence the processes that are immediately connected with the possibility of obstruction and the interruption of the course of the peace project.

The U.S. attitude, regarding the most important Bosnian issues, is thus sometimes positive, sometimes negative, but in any case holds a certain balance of power on the seesaw of Balkan relations.

B-H: Tehran Radio Cites 'U.S. Tyranny,' Blackmail in Aid

AU2403205696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Serbo-Croatian 2130 GMT 23 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary: "The Real Nature of U.S. Help to Bosnia-Herzegovina"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States has clearly demanded that Bosnia-Herzegovina decide between Iran and America. In the peace plan that was directed by the United States, the Muslim and Croat forces were unified into the Army of the Federation that Washington should arm and train. No other conditions apart from that were set. According to AFP, U.S. diplomat James Pardew set a new condition in his interview that has not been mentioned before. This senior U.S. official in charge of delivering U.S. military aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina pointed out that if Bosnian officials need U.S. arms, they must decide between Washington and Tehran.

This new condition has led the Bosnian Government to face a difficult decision, so it is logical to expect Sarajevo nevertheless to accept this condition to protect its people's rights and interests.

Only through the light of brotherly relations between the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran, one can realize the real nature of U.S. aid to the war-ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since the first days of the Bosnian tragedy of unprecedented volume, the Iranian nation and Government have done everything in their power to help their brothers and sisters, Muslims in Bosnia, without any political motives. The aid by the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the years Bosnia was in conflagration and blood was never sent with a view to earning any political points. Material, moral, and political support to Bosnia has also never given Iran any right to try to exert pressure on Sarajevo with a view to blackmailing it in any way or imposing its political will. The Iranian Government has always examined solutions for the Bosnian crisis in the sense of ending the suffering and agony of the Muslim population in that country.

Contrary to that approach, the U.S. Government sees Bosnia as a window through which it will present its long-awaited new world order. Seen from that angle, military and economic aid is only a part of Washington foreign policy focused on the Balkans and every gun and bullet sent to Bosnia is meant to prepare the path for the realization of U.S. goals. This is a fact that the Bosnian people understand and completely recognize and will aturally not yield to the political blackmail by U.S. tyranny.

B-H: Izetbegovic Comments on Federation, Elections, Iran

AU2203193296 Sarajevo FOCUS in Serbo-Croatian 21 Mar 96 pp 7, 9

[Interview with Alija Izetbegovic, president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency, by Nerzuk Curak; place and date not given: "If Elections Are Not Held, Our Recognition, Particularly of the Serbian Entity, Will Be Withdrawn"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Curak] President, after receiving treatment at the clinical center you are now convalescing at home. How are you?

[Izetbegovic] I am generally fine. Thank God, I am recuperating.

[Curak] You are known for often saying that Bosnia-Herzegovina is one of the rare countries that has succeeded in establishing exceptionally friendly ties with two of the greatest enemies on the planet, that is, the United States and Iran. This is a fact. However, recent events have threatened these relations to an extent that is seriously influencing Bosnia-Herzegovina's general international position. Has the United States made its aid contingent on "cooling" relations with Iran, and if this is so, how can we find a way out of this viscous circle that has been imposed on us? On the other hand, U.S. officials are not backing down from their claims that another 200 mujahidin are still in Bosnia; if this is true, it means the breakdown of the Dayton accords, and if not, what does the United States think it can gain?

[Izetbegovic] It is absolutely untrue that another 200 mujahidin are still in Bosnia. The truth is that there are some 50 demobilized, and therefore former, members of the "El-Mujahid" unit, in two locations, and that is no secret. They are now civilians, who have been in Bosnia for a long time, and they stayed because in the meantime they started families and obtained citizenship. We have told the Americans as much. Members of the said unit and the Iranians did not maintain contact during the war, and moreover, their roles were quite different. The Iranians were military instructors, or people who carried out tasks connected to logistics and our munitions plants, while the mujahidin were exclusively troops, and their unit was part of the B-H Army. The Americans are either not well informed—there are a lot of "friends" here who have an interest in stirring up trouble—or they are trying to put pressure on us. As you know, we have offered the Americans [Implementation Force, IFOR] joint commissions and a tour of all locations, but we have not received any answers so far. By signing the Dayton accord we signed an obligation to end military cooperation with Iran, and that has been implemented.

Prime Minister Muratovic just recently paid a visit to Tehran. His job was to reestablish our relations with Iran on new foundations, in line with the altered circumstances, that is, from war to exclusively peacetime relations. Instead of military, we now need economic cooperation, and no one should have a problem with this. These are very difficult, or better said, critical days for Bosnia. I am not sure that the public is fully aware of the seriousness of the situation. We are very often caught between survival and dignity. We have to take into account both of these things, and our only real policy will be the one that manages to maintain both. This can be quite a balancing act at times.

[Curak] I recently visited Bosnian Krajina, and I passed Serb, Bosnian, and Croatian Defense Council military police checkpoints on the Sarajevo-Velika Kladusa route. I did not run into any problems at any of these checkpoints, but at IFOR's checkpoint, I have to say that I felt like a man who had lost his national dignity. Namely, the IFOR officer ordered all men out of the bus, after which his troops searched the bus, looking for either arms or something else, irrespective of the fact that this was Sarajevo Centrotrans' regular commercial line. I have mentioned this as an illustration for the question: Is IFOR behaving in line with its mandate when it behaves in this way, and can its mission in Bosnia be treated as some form of "constructive occupation"?

[Izetbegovic] Yes, you could say that, but this was all calculated in Dayton. It was clear from the formulations that the Americans insisted on. These formulations have given IFOR free rein and immense discretionary rights. The only consolation is that this is a temporary state of affairs. In addition to this, a certain tough line toward us was the condition or price for a tough line toward them—you know whom I have in mind. Allow me to remind you: According to the initial idea, IFOR was to be stationed only on the territory of the Federation, and it was not to venture into areas that we call the Serb region. We rejected this, and insisted that IFOR go to Banja Luka and deploy on B-H borders. This was accepted on the condition of IFOR's larger, almost unlimited authority. We then assessed that the benefits were greater than the disadvantages, and accepted a situation that undoubtedly limits our sovereignty. However, our thoughts were along these lines: This is temporary, it will last a year, but it will give us a chance to hold more or less relevant elections, which, again, are a vital condition for the integration of Bosnia. Perhaps now the paradox, that you experienced no trouble passing through Serb checkpoints but were harassed by IFOR, will be clearer to you.

[Curak] One of the most important political questions is certainly the process of establishment of the Bosniak-Croatian Federation. The way in which the federal partner understands the Federation is rather irritating. After the establishment of the separate federal government, the Federation is still at a standstill, whereas Croatian politicians are coming up with new proposals. It appears that as soon as we settle one demand, they come up with another, and in all this it is hard to assess where the end might be to such political blackmail. Can you define the threshold of dignity and interests beyond which the Bosniaks can no longer give in? Finally, will the Federation succeed at all?

[Izetbegovic] I wonder that as well, and I think that, after all, all the Bosnians are wondering the same. I will tell you some of my thoughts. The Federation is certainly in the interests of Bosniaks. Some of the Croats want it, and some obviously do not, and those are, as a rule, people who have arms and power in their hands. Now for many reasons, more or less known, they do not want to publicly say this, so they are using the strategy of exhaustion, in order to make us say first that we are sick and tired of that game, and give up the project. And we, Bosnians, see through that game, and we have decided to endure, aware of the fact that this is the way that leads toward the integration of Bosnia, and the integration of Bosnia is an interest of all the normal people living in it. Our main weapon is, again, our persistence, and thank God, we have a lot of such a weapon. Therefore, I think that in this tug of war we will end up as victors. After all, we do not have much to lose.

[Curak] On the day of publication of this interview, the last Sarajevo city district that used to be under Serb occupation will be transferred to the jurisdiction of the central authorities. This is the final and definite liberation of Sarajevo, and I ask you whether it could possibly happen that the Bosniaks, through the form of district (some political circles are proposing that all the areas connected by the tram network be organized as a district, which is nonsense), might lose the city for which so many people died?

[Izetbegovic] I do not think that we can lose here. In Sarajevo we are playing with the white chessmen, and the other side may play with whatever it wants. It is in our interest that some of the Serbs stay in Sarajevo and around it. I do not know why some Bosniaks do not understand this. We do not need to be afraid of the district either. Of course, we will not accept any overdoing in such things. After all, we can always use one argument: Gentlemen, let us count graveyards. This is one of the arguments I am usually reluctant to use, but if some overambitious demands and aspirations need to be cooled down, I have no other choice but to warn them of the most cruel reality of all: our graveyards.

[Curak] I want to ask you a question, conditionally said, of a war nature: Does the Bosnian Army has a right, in case Bosnia-Herzegovina is partitioned following IFOR's departure, to try to preserve the country by military means, and do we have promises from international factors that Bosnia-Herzegovina would not take the consequences for such a thing? Or, to put it even simpler: If, for instance, Brcko were to be ceded to the Federation by international arbitrage, and the Serb authorities showed themselves unwilling to abide by such a decision, would we be able to enforce the decision by military means? At the political level this question reduces to the following: Is Bosnia possible?

[Izetbegovic] As for Brcko, the decision by arbitrage should be implemented by IFOR, and that is it, just as in the case of Sarajevo. There is no difference between the two. Precisely for that reason deadlines have been squeezed within one year. As for the Army, in this transitional period it is still a republican institution and instrument of defense of Bosnia-Herzegovina's state sovereignty. Any of its actions in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina are legal. The Army will not take any action if the other side fulfills its commitments, and if the other side really does so, Bosnia is not only possible, but also accomplished.

[Curak] With regard to your position in the Bosniak national body, as well as to your political function, how would you now, after four years of war, define the spiritual and political state of our nation in these first months of peace? Can we take a certain national inventory, and what is the balance after all these years? Will the Bosniaks succeed in building all of their national institutions, or will we remain crippled again? In other words, how do you assess the contribution of the Bosniak intelligentsia to the national cause, and has it really exerted itself to its utmost limits of power?

[Izetbegovic] There is a paradox, which I hope is apparent: The loftiest national goal of the Bosniaks, strictly taken, is neither national nor solely Bosniak—that is, an integral Bosnia, which means a civil state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Hence many misunderstandings, some of them even with our intelligentsia. With regard to that goal, some of our intellectuals believe they would be better off without any national identity, and as such would serve Bosnia-Herzegovina best. I personally have a strong Bosniak national and Islamic religious identity, which poses no problem for me in feeling at the same time as a greater Bosnian. I personally resolved that dilemma with myself a long time ago, while many still have not.

As for national Bosniak institutions, they are being built, despite a delay due to hesitation and the dilemmas I have just mentioned. But in one point there is no dilemma whatsoever: The Bosniak people have assumed definite shape through this war, have created their own state and army, and through their struggle have acquired an international reputation. Is there any relevant factor in the world that is not familiar with Bosnia and the Bosniak people?

[Curak] Recently there have been opinions that elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina are less and less certain, at least in terms of this year. It seems this could cement the division in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If elections fail to come, can it be considered that the Dayton accords have not been implemented, and what would that mean in political language? Can the failure to conduct elections be understood as the end of the Serb entity, that is, does the Bosnian Government in such a situation have a right not to recognize it as a legal entity?

[Izetbegovic] The Dayton accords are a whole. We accepted some less favorable solutions because of other, more favorable solutions. This is what makes a balance in some agreement. There one cannot choose: I will implement this provision, and not that one. For instance, you want to get paid for goods, but you do not want to deliver them. Elections are one of the most essential parts of the agreement. Without elections there is no Dayton, and I completely agree with what your question suggests: If elections are not held, our recognition of the Serb entity within Bosnia-Herzegovina will be deemed withdrawn.

[Curak] The last question I want to ask you concerns the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Has your temporary absence in any way influenced the power structure in the Presidency itself so as to change it? Now you have had an opportunity to assess from a distance how the Presidency functions when you are away. Are you satisfied with its functioning?

[Izetbegovic] Yes, I am closely watching the work of members of the collective head of state while I am away. I am satisfied with their work without me. And if I may joke a little, it seems that they are, as well.

B-H: Muratovic on Brussels Talks, NATO Presence

LD2203222896 Sarajevo Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine in Serbo-Croatian 2100 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Bosnia-Herzegovina delegation held talks with representatives of the European Union and NATO in Brussels on 21 March. Special emphasis was laid on the reconstruction of the country, the return of refugees, the forthcoming elections, and the membership of Bosnia-Herzegovina in European institutions and NATO.

Hasan Muratovic, prime minister of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, comments on the results of the Brussels talks.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, following the Brussels visit is Europe closer to Bosnia, that is, is Bosnia closer to Europe, and have any specific agreements been reached this time?

[Muratovic] As far as communications closeness is concerned, we agreed on commercial flights. I believe that flights to Sarajevo will be introduced in the nearest future. We landed at the airport in our little plane [Bosnian airlines] for the first time.

As far as other things go, I am certain we will enter the procedure for admission to the Council of Europe very soon and we will be granted membership in Partnership for Peace in the very near future. This very near future is probably conditional on the elections and the stabilization of peace here.

[Correspondent] Admission to the Partnership for Peace program is a process parallel to Bosnia-Herzegovina's request for membership in the Council of Europe. Which process has gone further?

[Muratovic] I believe that we will first become members of the Council of Europe.

[Correspondent] Why?

[Muratovic] Because this process has gone further—Macedonia [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] is already a member, Slovenia and Croatia are ahead of us, so it is high time for them to accept us.

[Correspondent] Is the Partnership for Peace program perhaps linked to announcements—even made by Hans Koschnick [Mostar's EU administrator]—on the need for NATO's presence in Bosnia after the expiry of the current mandate.

[Muratovic] I do not think that those two things are directly linked. So far we have not discussed NATO's presence after the IFOR [Implementation Force] mission expires. However, some people here and elsewhere believe that a certain presence will be necessary. But this presence must not bring our sovereignty into question, especially not after the experience we had with IFOR's presence. We did invite IFOR, all this was necessary, but our sovereignty has indeed been brought into question and, as you know, we have had problems in this respect. [end recording]

B-H: Germany's Kinkel Outlines Priorities for Normalization

LD2403140796 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1344 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bonn, Mar 24 (TANJUG)—Following Saturday's [23 March] contact group meeting in Moscow German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel listed the seven most important tasks that he thinks should be completed to create conditions for the normalisation of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The first on his list is the release of prisoners of war, he told German reporters after the Moscow meeting.

The second is creating conditions for the return of refugees which should, according to the Germans, be done as soon as possible, WELT AM SONNTAG wrote on Sunday.

The list also included the extradition to the Hague International Tribunal of all those accused of war crimes, and the organisation of elections in Bosnia at the end of the summer.

Kinkel also mentioned a part of the Dayton Agreement which has not been implemented so far, namely freedom of movement of all ethnic groups without their lives being endangered.

He urged the start of agricultural production as soon as possible so that the people can start to feed themselves and reduce dependence on international humanitarian aid.

And finally, he designated as an important task the removal of mines which are strewn throughout Bosnia.

He also told German papers that the possible extension of the present one-year IFOR [Implementation Force] mandate should not be speculated with but that the remaining months should be used in the best possible way to carry out civilian reconstruction under IFOR protection.

B-H: Zubak Says IFOR's One-Year Mission 'Too Short'

AU2503090896 Split SLOBODNA DALMACIJA in Serbo-Croatian 17 Mar 96 p 2

[Interview with Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation President Kresimir Zubak by Veso Vegar; place and date not given: "The 'Civic' State Is a Death Sentence for Bosnia-Herzegovina"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On 19 March it will be two years since the ceremonial signing of the agreement between the Croats and Muslims in Washington, which set the basis for the establishment of a new state community, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. How far the construction of this federal edifice of Croats and Muslims has come and what problems this process is encountering were among the questions that we put to one of the signatories of the Washington agreement, Kresimir Zubak, the president of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. [passage omitted]

[Vegar] Francis Boyle, a former adviser of Alija Izetbegovic, thinks that it was actually the Washington agreement that divided Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Zubak] This is a process and it is possible for relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina to finish exactly in that way. But that is one of the possible directions and another is the reintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Personally, I believe that there is no reintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the way that Silajdzic sees it, because that will not be accepted by the Croatian or Serb people, and even less in the way that Alija Izetbegovic sees it. It is supposed to be a civic democratic state, but in fact it would be a national state of the Muslim people, in which the Croats and Serbs, as Izetbegovic said in his speech in Zenica, would be minorities. Anyone who believes in that possibility is signing the death warrant for the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia-Herzegovina is possible only as a state community of a federal-cantonal type, a community of three equally sovereign nations.

[Vegar] How would you define the political forces of both partners that are resisting the implementation of the Federation?

[Zubak] It is clear that within the Muslim leadership there are those who would be ready to implement the Washington agreement in its original spirit. However, the Muslim leadership wants to change that spirit. After all, this is not an unusual situation. The public knows that that leadership before the war used to agree and sign things and then tell their people that they had signed something different.

That is also the case with the latest agreement from Rome. The Croats worry about that behavior, but they also have the tough task of explaining to their people what they have actually signed. [sentence as published] Thus they claimed that nothing would change in Rome, although they knew that the decision of Hans Koschnick was illegal. And when it came to a change, there were problems of how to explain it to the people. [passage omitted]

[Vegar] Why did you say that the Federation institutions could not take responsibility for the situation in and around Sarajevo?

[Zubak] They cannot! You see, one cannot hide the fact from the international forces here, and the world media write about this as well, that in the suburbs of Sarajevo there is anarchy and there are frequent robberies and intimidation of the remaining Serbs. However, the Sarajevo media are trying to hide this. The representatives of the international community speak about it, many citizens come to me, and, since the Federation police have not been set up according to the agreement, I let it be known to the public that I could not take responsibility for what was happening.

[Vegar] Does a Federation police force actually exist?

[Zubak] No! But we were not able to say that adequately. We Croats thought that it was enough to be right and it turned out that that was not the case. That is because the Croats were already being stigmatized as the ones who were blocking the implementation of the Federation, whereas actually the problem is with the other side.

AID in the Hands of SDA

[Vegar] You asked for the abolition of the Agency for Investigation and Documentation (AID) [Bosnia-Herzegovina intelligence service]. Why? Is it because they found out about you making a secret trip to Pale, as some Sarajevo newspapers wrote, or....

[Zubak] The Sarajevo media use such dishonest means that, in that respect, even the Serb media are nothing in comparison to them. The syndrome of the late Risto Djogo [former director of the Pale Serb press agency SRNA] is dominant among them.

[Vegar] What, in fact, is AID, in whose activities both the CIA and IFOR [Implementation Force] have been interested?

[Zubak] AID was set up in violation of the Federation Constitution. It is the transformed former state security service. The Muslim leadership is much interested in its survival, because it has been the means for the ruling party, the SDA [Party of Democratic Action], to control ordinary people, drug trafficking, crime in general, and so on. [passage omitted]

The Endangered Dayton

[Vegar] So far, the implementation of the Dayton agreement has achieved precisely the opposite effect of what was planned; for example, the continuation of ethnic cleansing. Will that make the return of refugees and displaced persons completely impossible and, in that case, will it also jeopardize any chance of connecting the two entities and maintaining Bosnia-Herzegovina?

[Zubak] I was openly told by Momcilo Krajisnik [president of the assembly of the Serb entity] that they accepted the Dayton agreement, but that it was not the solution to which they aspired and that they would try to achieve their goals through political means. So, they have accepted Dayton as a necessity, but they have not given up their own concept. The Muslims are still living under the illusion that Bosnia-Herzegovina can be organized as a unified state, which, of course, would not be a state of three constituent and equal nations.

What has been offered, or rather imposed, by the Dayton agreement is closest to the political engagement of the Croatian people, which is contained in the so-called Livno issue, where we chose Bosnia-Herzegovina, but as a community of three nations. The other two sides have different concepts and I doubt that the implementation of the Dayton agreement will go as some people abroad believe. I have often heard people say that the Dayton agreement has little chance. Even if elections are held on time and IFOR withdraws after a year, I believe that the peace process will be endangered. Basically, I believe that IFOR's mandate of one year is too short.

[Vegar] The elections should be held by the end of September. However, there is already a lot of skepticism about the feasibility of that. What are the main tasks that have to be faced before the elections?

[Zubak] Even on paper it will not be easy to unify the rules for holding the elections, never mind putting them into practice. I am afraid of improvisation and that the elections will be held, the formalities satisfied, and then somebody will say: This is now the legitimate regime.

B-H: Ganic, Delic Visit 2d Corps, View IFOR Cooperation

AU2503171096 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During his visit to Tuzla-Podrinje Canton, Ejup Ganic, member of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina and vice president of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, visited the headquarters of the 2d Corps, where he was received by the commander of the Corps, Brigadier Sadovic with his aides.

General Rasim Delic introduced the high guest to the current situation in the zone of responsibility of the 2d Corps, particularly stressing good cooperation with the commands and units of the Implementation Force [IFOR] in this region in the implementation of the military part of the Dayton accord. Gen. Delic particularly stressed the dissatisfaction among army members because of the slow settlement of problems regarding care for the families of fallen soldiers, war disabled, and demobilized soldiers, as well as [words indistinct] who are supposed to compose the professional part of the Bosnia-Herzegovina army. In addition, the importance of achieving a just settlement of the status of Brcko was stressed, for the aggressor has been doing anything to illegally change the status of this city.

In his address, Ganic stressed the need for further development in cooperation with IFOR in the implementation of the Dayton accord, as well as for taking all necessary measures to carry out the process of transformation of the army in an adequate way.

B-H: Hebib, Federation Mediator on Strengthening of Police

AU2203201496 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Report by Zinaida Adilovic on a news conference held by Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation mediator Christian Schwarz-Schilling and Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation Interior Minister Avdo Hebib in Sarajevo on 22 March—recorded; Schwarz-Schilling speaks in English with superimposed translation into Serbo-Croatian]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Adilovic] During the talks, mediator Schwarz-Schilling was informed about the problems facing the Federation police. One of the main problems is the status of this police force and whether it is to be armed or not, because as Minister Hebib pointed out, it is not an observation force.

When it comes to the ethnic structure of the Federation police, which was of particular interest to Schwarz-Schilling, Minister Hebib stressed that the percentage structure was fully complied with in accordance with the 1991 census. Professionalism is the top priority in the Federation police, and when it comes to that and the ethnic structure, they are not Croats but professional policemen who are of Croat nationality, Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation Interior Minister Avdo Hebib stressed.

After this meeting we asked mediator Schwarz-Schilling to make a brief statement for Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina:

[Schwarz-Schilling] In my view, the main problem at the moment is the establishment of law and order in these areas. There can be no reintegration or confidence in the Federation if there is lawlessness that the police cannot control. That is why the strengthening of Federation police is a priority. We have to do all that is in our power to establish such a Federation police as soon as possible, together with the other forces, such as the Implementation Force.

[Adilovic] Minister Hebib said this about the meeting:

[Hebib] We had very useful talks with Mr. Schwarz-Schilling. We informed him about some problems that are reflected on the work of the police. I think that this was a very useful meeting, and we hope to have even better cooperation with all the international forces after this meeting in order to help our police forces.

B-H: Koschnick Cancels Meeting on Mostar Administration

LD2403192196 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mostar's EU administrator, Hans Koschnick, has postponed the holding of a meeting at which a single Mostar administration should have been established.

Namely, on 23 March, Ejup Ganic, a presidency member and vice president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation, proposed to the Kresimir Zubak, president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation, that a single administration be established in Mostar under EU auspices.

A letter sent by Koschnick to East Mostar Mayor Safet Orucevic said that the merging of the two administrations was not possible due to disagreements between the two sides.

Koschnick expressed his hope that Mostar will finally get a single administration following the elections in May.

B-H: Spain's Perez Casado Named New Mostar Administrator

AU2503171296 Paris AFP in English 1652 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Brussels, March 25 (AFP)—EU foreign ministers on Monday named Spaniard Ricardo Perez Casado as the European Union's provisional adminstrator of the southern Bosnia-Herzegovina city of Mostar.

Casado, 50, is the former mayor of Valencia, in southeast Spain. He replaces Germany's Hans Koschnick, who resigned in February as adminstrator of Mostar after protests from Croats there against sharing parts of the town with Moslems.

Mostar remains divided between Bosnian Croats and Moslems after a bitter 10-month war between the two communities.

Koschnick had been adminstrator since July 1994. EU administration of the city is due to continue until the end of the year.

Perez Casado, 50, was mayor of Valencia from 1979 to 1988.

B-H: Mostar Muslims Oppose Spanish Administrator

LD2403145096 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1431 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Belgrade, Mar 24 (TANJUG)—The news that Spaniard Ricardo Perez Casado will be appointed as the new EU administrator for the divided eastern Bosnian town of Mostar was received with visible disappointment by the Muslims there.

The EU Ministerial Council is likely to officially appoint Monday [25 March] Casado to the office replacing German Hans Koschnik, who resigned recently.

Muslim Radio Mostar reported on Sunday that Muslims in the town do not have much confidence in Spaniards.

In explanation, the radio recalled the night of May 9, 1993 when Spanish peackeepers shamelessly ran away from a Mostar boulevard leaving the Muslim population to the brutal Croat aggression.

During 1993 Muslims and Croats fought for territories in central and southern Bosnia and their most fierce conflicts took place in the area of Mostar from which some 40,000 Serbs were previously expelled.

The radio also said that Muslim refugees from Stolac, in southern Bosnia under Croat control, who are now in the eastern (Muslim) part of Mostar, accuse Spanish IFOR [Implementation Force] troops of joining the Croat side in restricting freedom of movement to Muslims.

Mostar should be a united city under the Dayton Agreement but no progress has yet been made in this sense because Croats have on several occasions undermined efforts undertaken by outgoing adminsitrator Koschnik.

B-H: IFOR Escorts 300 Muslims Visiting Mostar

AU2303200096 Paris AFP in English 1914 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, March 23 (AFP)—A group of Moslem refugees under NATO escort braved Croat police roadblocks to cross to the Croat side of this town, a western military source said here Saturday [23 March].

The group visited cemeteries in the districts of Stolac and Capljina, 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of Mostar, in a zone controlled by the Bosnian Croat forces (HVO), the source said.

No violent incidents were reported in the zone, patrolled by NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR).

But the six buses transporting more than 300 refugees were searched twice by police and customs officers, at the exit of the Moslem sector, the source said.

"They are trying to dissuade them from coming" to the Croat side, he said.

On Thursday, another group of 300 Moslem refugees paid visits to the same districts. IFOR armoured vehicles took up positions at different points along their bus route.

Last Sunday, three convoys of refugees visited Capljina for the first time since the bitter 11-month war between Croats and Moslems here in 1993-1994.

B-H: Muratovic, Kapetanovic Urge Safety for Zvornik Muslims

LD2303192896 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan Muratovic, prime minister of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Izudin Kapetanovic, prime minister of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation, today held a meeting with General Heinrich, deputy Implementation Force [IFOR] commander, and Michael Steiner [deputy to Carl Bildt]. The meeting was occasioned by the visit of representatives of local communities in the area of the Zvornik municipality which are due to be taken over by the Serb entity.

Prime Minister Muratovic informed his interlocutors that the Russian IFOR troops in the area had interpreted stipulations of the peace agreement incorrectly and were asking the local residents to leave.

General Heinrich was asked to issue appropriate instructions to IFOR troops; IFOR was also requested to ensure full security and freedom of movement to the people who intend to stay in their homes.

In the course of the conversation with Mr. Steiner, it was requested that the people who stay in these villages be offered all necessary safety and the strong presence of the international police force and monitors.

The participants in the talks agreed that the decision of the people to stay in their homes, regardless of the transfer of power, was extremely important.

A founding session of the regional civilian commission, at which this problem will be further discussed, will be held on 26 March in Tuzla.

B-H: Serbs Delayed in Taking Over Villages Around Zvornik

LD2303222396 Pale Srpska Televizija in Serbo-Croatian 1930 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The transfer of power in all territories which, under the Dayton Agreement, belong to the Muslim-Croat federation [Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation] has passed without any problems. This, however, is not the case with territories that should come under the Serb Republic control in line with the Dayton Agreement. Our TV crew visited the territory of the Zvornik municipality today.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent Zeljko Stojanovic] March 19, deadline for the full implementation of the Dayton agreement, has passed. The Serb police have not yet taken over the villages of Vitinica, Nezuk, and Kovacevici. [passage omitted]

[Colonel Dragomir Vasic, head of the Zvornik security center] In line with the agreement and orders by the Interior Ministry [of the Serb Republic] and owing to the fact that two state commissions [of the Serb Republic and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation] have been trying to exchange certain territories and correct the maps, the takeover by the Serb police of these villages was postponed until 22 March.

However, on the morning of 22 March we received written orders from the interior minister that the takeover of the villages was postponed until further notice. The two commissions are continuing their work and they assess that certain territories could be exchanged.

[Lieutenant Gajic] Our forces are at the entrance of Kovacevici. We are only waiting for the orders to go in. [passage omitted]

[Major Vojislav Tokanovic] Members of the Russian Implementation Force [IFOR] contingent are here. We contacted them twice so far and we have not seen any readiness on their part for the takeover.

This morning I was informed by Russian IFOR forces that they had already set up the borders, without our presence.

[Stojanovic] Who?

[Tokanovic] The Russian IFOR contingent.

[Vasic] I have to say that I am surprised by the indecisiveness of the Russian brigade to implement what they have undertaken under the Dayton Agreement.

I have mentioned on several occasions that they and the international police are obliged to enable the center

[Zvornik security center] to carry out the takeover and the transfer of this territory.

However, at our meetings with them and representatives of these Muslim villages, the Muslim delegation has made some incredible demands. The Russian brigade set out to comment on the demands; although, there was no need to do that.

For instance, Muslims from the villages have demanded that they keep the hunting weapons, rifles, and pistols in their houses. Then they asked for a number of people, Muslims from these villages, to be given blue uniforms [of the Serb police] so that our police force is not of one nation. The demands have reached the point that we cannot have only the Serb Republic flag in the villages—although, they belong to the Serb Republic entity—but the Bosnia-Herzegovina flag has to stand next to ours. These are illogical demands, indeed, which we cannot accept under any circumstances.

When we get the orders from the interior minister, we will enter the villages regardless of the above demands and establish the full Serb authority and control. [passage omitted] [end recording]

B-H: Russian IFOR Troops Accused of Pro-Serb Bias

LD2303131796 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1100 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The behavior of Russian soldiers, members of the Implementation Force [IFOR], has been worrying us recently [words indistinct] are pro-Serb oriented and therefore they have abused their powers and the mandate they were given by the Dayton agreement, says a protest letter [words indistinct] the mayor of Zvornik addressed to Carl Bildt, Admiral Leighton Smith, and the commander of the Russian brigade.

Recently, the Russian soldiers have [word indistinct] to Bosniak [Muslim] people who live in six villages which should be taken over by the Serb entity [the Serb Republic] in line with the Dayton Agreement. Their goal is to intimidate people into leaving the villages. Even after our protests to Russian officers and commanders these activities have not ceased.

In [name indistinct] at 1130 [1030 GMT] on 22 March a group of Russian IFOR soldiers who were patrolling the village addressed the people as follows: Be ready to leave by 1300 which is when the [Bosnian] Serb police are supposed to come and take over the area. The soldiers also asked for the state [Bosnia-Herzegovina] flag to be removed, calling it a Muslim flag. People from the village refused.

The letter goes on to say: I want to mention that we have had a meeting with the Serb side in the presence of IFOR and we have agreed on this [the takeover]. We have clearly conveyed the wish of our people to stay in their homes.

We believe that such an attitude and behavior on the part of the Russian soldiers is inappropriate, in violation of the Dayton Agreement, and shows a desire to create incident-prone situations. We believe that the obligation on Russian IFOR soldiers is to prevent incidents not create them.

That is why we wish to ask you to react immediately and warn Russian IFOR soldiers to behave in accordance with the commitments undertaken in line with the Dayton Agreement. Should any unwanted situation arise you, together with the Russian IFOR commander, will bear the responsibility, the protest letter ends.

B-H: Agreement Reached on Sarajevo-Trnovo Road Movement

LD2403215396 Pale Srpska Televizija in Serbo-Croatian 1930 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the light of numberous incidents that took place during the Serb exodus from Serb Sarajevo, it is not surprising that another one took place today at a check point in Kijevo, which just serves as an additional proof that the other side is not going to carry out the transfer of authority in this area as it had allegedly been envisaged by the peace agreement—in a painless and civilized way. Prompted by the incident, representatives of the two entities met today through IFOR [Implementation Force] mediation.

[Correspondent Zeljko Stojanovic] What we had been guessing has happened. The Muslim police, in contravention of the peace agreement, has been stopping vehicles and searching passengers of the Serb nationality at the Sarajevo-Trnovo road which, according to the Dayton agreement, belongs to the Muslim-Croat federation. Complaints of mistreatment have already been lodged with the international police and the Serb Republic police.

Therefore, the command of the international police for Sarajevo sector organized an emergency meeting in Trnovo between representatives of the Serb Republic and Muslim-Croat Federation ministries of internal affairs in order to prevent further exacerbation in relations. Muslim representatives fought tooth and nail for the Muslim police to be given the authority to stop and search vehicles, but the international and Serb attitude was categorical.

On this road, which is defined by the the Dayton agreement as being of great importance, no one has the right to stop vehicles and search passengers if the international police are not present.

[Begin recording by Anti Olkinuora, commander of the international police task force for Sarajevo sector, in English with superimposed translation into Serbo-Croatian] An agreement has been reached to facilitate full freedom of movement along the Trnovo corridor. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Begin recording by Major Goran Sehovac, commander of the Serb police station in Kula] It has been said that an agreement was reached at the meeting today. This is not an agreement. We have no right to reach agreements and change what has been signed. The federal police has no right to search Serb passengers travelling along the corridor in the absence of the international police. This also applies to the Serb police. [passage omitted] [end recording]

B-H: Muslim War Crimes Suspect Vows To Win Election

AU2403172896 Paris AFP in English
1607 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zagreb, March 24 (AFP)—A rebel Bosnian Moslem leader wanted by Sarajevo authorities for alleged war crimes said Sunday [24 March] he was running in Bosnia-Herzegovina's election to win.

"I am standing in the elections with the aim of winning," Fikret Abdic told the Croatian weekly Obzor.

Abdic, 57, a rebel Moslem who allied with the Bosnian Serbs against the Moslem-backed Bosnian government forces in the four-year war that ended in December, is wanted over war crimes in the Bihac region of northwest Bosnia.

On February 16 he registered a new political party—the People's Democratic Union (DNZ)—with Bosnian Croat authorities in the southern town of Mostar. The DNZ is already claiming 20,000 members.

Under the Dayton peace accords for Bosnia-Herzegovina, national elections are to be held between June and September. Local elections in Mostar, a city divided between the formerly warring Croats and Moslems, are scheduled for May.

Abdic said the DNZ would campaign on three main issues—defending victims of war, reconciliation between peoples and creating a prosperous Bosnia.

Authorities in Sarajevo asked Croatian leaders to extradite Abdic in October to stand trial on charges of war crimes against civilians and military personnel.

Abdic sought refuge in Croatia in September 1995 after government forces finally defeated Bosnian Serbs, Croatian Serbs and rebel Moslems.

During the fighting there were numerous reports of besieged Moslems in Bihac being deprived of food supplies or abused in other ways by rebel Serb forces.

B-H: Bosniak Villagers Pledge To Stay After Serb Takeover

AU2503112196 Paris AFP in English
1053 GMT 25 Mar 96

[Report by Kevin McElderry]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kovacevici, Bosnia-Herzegovina, March 25 (AFP)—After nearly four years defending their homes against attack, Moslems in three remote villages have pledged to stay put as the Dayton peace accord hands the Bosnian Serbs what they could not take by force.

Bitterness straddles the divide through the remote hills around Sapna in northeast Bosnia. It mingles with confusion in villages such as this, whose residents cannot understand why communities that are 100 percent Moslem should be handed over to the Serbs.

The Bosnians have an expression, "Bogu iza ledja," which means "behind God's back." In Kovacevici, Nezuk and Zaseok, villagers believe the phrase could have been penned for them.

A green Moslem flag hung from the top of Kovacevici's shattered minaret as Mejra Sunic showed off the grenade shell which landed on her house four years ago.

"They can put a Serb flag on that building but there are no Serb houses here," she said.

Her neighbour Hanumka Sunic interrupted. "The Chetniks (Serbs) killed my daughter-in-law," she said. "The Chetniks were not here and never will be."

"We don't want to leave because we live here, and we will fight with stones for it if that is needed," added Sunic, 52, before relenting: "We don't like war any more. We didn't need it before and we don't need it now."

Adding to their fears for the future are rumours that they will be forced out of their homes to make way for Serbs who fled suburbs of Sarajevo, handed over to Moslem-Croat federation control.

A man who would not be named said Serbs attacked the village on March 22, 1993, with tanks and armoured vehicles but were driven back.

He said village leaders met 10 Serb officials from the regional authority in Zvornik last week and asked that any police sent to patrol the community be at least mixed Moslem and Serb. The request was rejected.

They also asked when they would be allowed to travel to Zvornik. "Never," came the answer, the man said.

Villagers thought Russian IFOR (peace Implementation Force) troops were biased towards the Serbs, but hoped the Americans might be able to help, he added.

There are two ways of getting to Zaseok. One is via an old confrontation line, a dirt track along no-man's-land with shallow trenches and wooden gun positions visible yards away in the trees on either side, where the ever-present threat of landmines lurks.

The other is over snow-speckled mountain tops on a track that degenerates into a morass passable only by tractor.

"We defended this place, we fought for it for four years, and after that it was to be handed over," said Muhamed Salihovic bitterly. "We're in a panic but we've decided to stay here and not move, no matter what."

He also spoke of the meeting with Serb officials from Zvornik and of the request for a mixed police force, and added that villagers had expected UN, Serb and Russian officials on Friday but they had failed to show up.

Resula Salihovic, a relative, said the Dayton agreement "says anyone can go to their own homes, but not in our case. Well, we don't have anything but we will stay on our own."

The situation in Kovacevici and Zaseok was similar in Nezuk, according to a UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman in Tuzla.

He said Serb officials had twice postponed sending police to the villages last week and it was unclear when they would actually turn up.

However, the official added that observers who spoke to Serb authorities in Zvornik said they "fully intend to take control of the villages and they expect the Bosnians living there to go away eventually."

UN police sources told AFP they were aware of the tensions in the area, but a UN policeman in Kovacevici when AFP arrived there refused to comment on the villagers' fears, saying only he did not expect any trouble.

In the meantime UN police and Russian IFOR troops patrol the areas daily waiting for the day when Serb police make their long-awaited arrival.

B-H: IFOR Media Said To Exhibit 'Arrogant Behavior'

AU2203152796 Hanau NOVA BOSNA in Serbo-Croatian 20 Mar 96 p 11

[Article by A. Redzepagic: "IFOR Dances but Not to a B-H Tune"]

[FBIS Translated Text] These days Sarajevo has gotten yet another radio station, that of the Implementation Force [IFOR]. This is no surprise, for over the past four years in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina a great number of self-proclaimed independent radio and TV stations have simply mushroomed.

This IFOR radio station is also said to be independent. Independent in the sense that they did not ask for permission or consult anybody to set it up. They did it independently, in their own style, considering nobody's opinion. Perhaps they did not know whom they were supposed to ask, or whom they were supposed to inform about it. Who knows?

Unadjusted Law

In the existing Law on Public Media it is said that any physical or legal person has a right to found a public information service (radio, television, newspapers, etc.), whereas foreigners cannot be founders or publishers, but can participate with their capital up to 25 percent.

Still, IFOR's radio station is here, and not only that. IFOR also has its own newspaper, HERALD OF PEACE, printed in the Bosnian language, and in Latin or Cyrillic script.

Our authorities know that the radio station exists, and that the newspaper is being published, but they certainly do not know the reasons why nobody found it for necessary to register them. In the Office for Information and Registration of Public Media with the Ministry for Science, Culture and Sports, it is said:

Agreement on Cooperation

"We do not have anything from them, they did not consult us at all. On the other hand, the existing Law, dating from the prewar times, has not been adjusted to the situation we are in," Neska Kulenovic of the Office for Information says, adding that right now a new law is being worked out, which will define the details of procedures to be followed in such situations.

Some time ago UNPROFOR addressed the Office for Information for permission to install an ultrashortwave radio station. However, this was not feasible, neither from the legal point of view nor in light of of the limited capacity of the system of frequencies. To found this radio station they were supposed to contact us, and I do not now why they have not done so until now. The Direction for Allocation of Frequencies with the Ministry for Communications and Traffic has sent a letter of protest to Dr. Muratovic, chairman of the State Committee for Relations With IFOR, urging them to take adequate measures with regard to this case, said Arif Zulic, aide of the minister for science, culture and sports. However, it seems that the protest has finally yielded results. As we are told by sources in the State Committee for Relations With IFOR, talks are being held right now between the representatives of the Direction for Frequencies and of IFOR. If everything goes according to plan, similar stations will be founded in Banja Luka, Mostar, Tuzla, and Zenica.

"IFOR has a right to that, according to the agreements on cooperation and on their status in our country," Amir Hadziomeragic, aide of the chairman of the State Committee for Relations With IFOR, told us.

Of course, IFOR has a right to found a radio station, but only in cooperation with our responsible institutions. The head of the Direction for Frequencies, Emin Skopljak, has announced the possibility of quickly achieving a satisfactory settlement. However, can it indeed be satisfactory in view of the fact that it is we who reminded the IFOR of what ought to be done?

Regardless of how much we need IFOR here, and how efficiently and well it does its job here, we should not put up with its arrogant behavior and disregard of some of the basic principles it should stick to.

B-H: IFOR Helps Restore Electricity in Gorazde

AU2303171096 Paris AFP in English
1639 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarajevo, March 23 (AFP)—The lights were coming back on in Gorazde, eastern Bosnia, Saturday [23 March] for the first time in four years, the NATO-led peace Implementation Force (IFOR) said.

A new generator, purchased by the Moslem-Croat Federation, was to be connected to the local power grid during the day by Bosnian technicians, with help from IFOR, spokesman Brigadier Andrew Cumming said.

It will run from 7:00 a.m. to midnight (0600 to 2300 GMT) for the city's 20,000 inhabitants, he said.

Gorazde, a Moslem enclave, is connected to the Bosnian capital Sarajevo by a corridor that cuts through Serb-held territory.

During nearly four years of war in the former Yugoslav republic, Gorazde residents produced some electricity in homemade fashion, using small power stations fitted onto rafts on the Drina river.

B-H: Sarajevo Claims Dayton Agreement 'Failed' in Gorazde

AU2203172296 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Report by Anka Filetic in Gorazde]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cooperation with the Implementation Force [IFOR] soldiers on the ground is pretty good, we were told by deputy intelligence commander Admir Kuljuh, in charge of the Dayton agreement implementation. The problems and misunderstandings arise with the Sarajevo IFOR sector and their high representatives.

According to Mr. Kuljuh, IFOR has not managed to force the Serb side to remove the mines and clear away the forces and equipment by the deadline from the zones that should have belonged to the Federation as of 19 March. The freedom of movement is another issue that IFOR should have secured and has not, at least not in Gorazde. The Serb side has since D+30 closed the eastern corridor several times. The traffic of goods and people has been limited to three days a week. Although they should have already started work on the bridge in (?Osanica) on the western part of the corridor, IFOR has only just launched surveys and consultations. To open the road to Ustikolina, policemen and members of the engineering units of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army 81st Division were forced to demine a part of the Chetnik lines so as to open passage across the old railway bridge. As Mr. Kuljuh said, they received overwhelming assistance from the Portuguese IFOR team in that task.

The question of the safety of the people of the Gorazde canton has not been resolved; 150 IFOR members are not sufficient to guarantee their safety.

There is also no answer to the following question: Why has the Gorazde canton been left last to reintegrate, even though there have been many demands that this be done sooner? The relevant people in IFOR have not given answers to these questions, but it seems certain that Gorazde is again subject to manipulation. Concessions are again being made to the Serb side, which is interested in delaying the reintegration.

19 March has been and gone, the deadline by which all this should have been done. Unfortunately, many things still remain to be implemented in the Gorazde canton. The Dayton agreement failed the test in Gorazde.

B-H: Kasagic, French Delegation Discuss Reconstruction

LD2203191096 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1814 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pale, March 22 (TANJUG)—Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska (R.S.) Rajko Kasagic had a talk on Friday [22 March] at Pale, the administrative centre of the Serb entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH), with a French delegation headed by Claude Martin, assistant secretary general of the Foreign Ministry.

An announcement issued after the talk said that the delegation arrived here to see for themselves the situation in the R.S. so that France could also join the reconstruction of the war-devastated region.

This meeting was held ahead of an international gathering in Brussels April 12-13, which would insist on a greater engagement of international institutions and countries for the reconstruction of the BIH.

Kasagic reaffirmed that an R.S. delegation would attend the Brussels gathering, but at this moment it would not be realistic to expect this delegation's joint participation with representatives of the Muslim-Croat Federation, the other entity in the BIH.

Martin said that France intended to actively include itself in the reconstruction of the BIH. He added that this process had to be stepped up.

B-H: Banja Luka Party Wants Karadzic To Run in Elections

AU2503165996 Sarajevo VECERNJE NOVINE in Serbo-Croatian 25 Mar 96 p 3

[ONASA report: "Karadzic Should Be Allowed To Run in Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Social Liberal Party [as published] from Banja Luka is calling for Radovan Karadzic, chairman of the terrorist Serb Democratic Party and indicted war criminal, to be allowed to run in the elections, Banja Luka Liberal Chairman Miodrag Zivanovic said in Sarajevo.

"If not, the Serb people will make a national hero, a martyr out of him, someone who has been terribly wronged by the 'ruthless' international community. The longer the elections are delayed, the greater the Karadzic myth will grow," Zivanovic said.

B-H: Tuzla Police Chief Refuses Meeting on Refugees

AU2403210796 Paris AFP in English 2001 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, March 24 (AFP)—A Bosnian police chief has refused to meet a Serb counterpart to discuss the future of 8,000 Moslems wanting to return to their homes in Serb-controlled territory, an informed source said Sunday [24 March].

In a sign of ongoing tensions between the former warring factions despite the Dayton peace agreements, the police chief of Tesanj said he was under orders not to meet his counterpart from Doboj, the source said.

That was despite the presence of 8,000 Moslem refugees in Tesanj, which is under Moslem-Croat Federation control, who want to return home to Doboj, 20 kilometres (12 miles) to the north in Serb-held territory.

Implementation Force (IFOR) spokesman Terje Myklevoll confirmed that Tesanj police chief Nedzad Korajlic had refused to meet his opposite number from Doboj, Vlado Djurdkevic.

He said it meant a "unique opportunity" to ease the plight of refugees in the area had been lost.

Officials from the Nordpol battalion, which comprises troops from Poland and Scandinavia, had been trying to get the police chiefs together for some time, he said.

"We're very disappointed. This was a unique opportunity to obtain one of the major aspects of the (Dayton) treaty," he added.

"At first the Tesanj chief of police was positive. Then he said he needed approval from higher authorities to take part, and they said no."

Myklevoll said Tesanj had more than 15,000 refugees in total on top of a population of 42,500 inhabitants. While many Moslems wanted to return to Doboj, he did not know of Serbs hoping to move in the opposite direction.

"We know thousands (of Moslems) want to cross the borderline to return to their properties. We stressed it a lot in trying to get the police chiefs to meet," he added.

"We had expected problems from the chief of police in Doboj, and when we got the message from him that he would co-operate, we thought that would be settled."

He said implementation of civilian aspects of the Dayton peace accords was "months behind schedule" and added: "This will make it more difficult for us and puts pressure on the military side."

No officials were available in Tesanj to comment.

B-H: UN Rapporteur on Serb Massacres in Srebrenica

AU2203152296 Paris AFP in English
1514 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Geneva, March 22 (AFP)—Bosnian Serb forces massacred at least 3,000 Bosnians in July 1995 in the Srebrenica area, the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the former Yugoslavia said in a report published Friday [22 March].

Elisabeth Rehn, who visited the area in February, said: "Recent evidence tends to confirm allegations that Bosnian Serb forces masscred at least 3000 Bosnians, and possibly many more," in the eastern enclave of Srebrenica.

The killings were "in gross violation of international human rights and humanitarian law," she said.

Rehn added that evidence had also been made available concerning massacres carried out, allegedly by Bosnian Serb forces, in the region of Ljubija in 1992 and near Sanski Most in October 1995.

Her report expressed hope that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugloslavia, based in The Hague, would be given "adequate means to investigate these allegations and finally resolve the uncertainties about what happened at these locations."

B-H: Refugees in Serb Republic Granted Refugee Status

LD2203182196 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian
1740 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sarajevo, 22 Mar (SRNA)—Dragan Kekic, the commissioner for refugees and humanitarian aid of the Serb Republic, today ordered all municipal commissions for refugees to immediately issue certificates granting refugee status to all refugees on Serb Republic territory whose status has not yet been regulated.

"Certificates on recognition of refugee status will be issued to all persons who comply with conditions stemming from Article Two of the law on refugees and displaced persons," it is said in the order with immediate effect.

B-H: Serb Military Court Continues Trial of Croat Suspect

AU2203204396 Banja Luka Srpski Radio Network
in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The trial of Ivan Stjepanovic, who, as a member of the 106th HVO [Croatian Defense Council] Brigade, committed war crimes against Serb civilians from June to late August 1992, continued today before a panel of five judges at the Banja Luka military court.

The panel, chaired by Lieutenant Major Nikola Tomasevic, was presented with a revised indictment, which, on the basis of the statement of witnesses [words indistinct], charges the defendant with murder and atrocities committed against Serb civilians in the village of Bukvik near Brcko in the summer of 1992.

Lieutenant Major Nikola Tomasevic reported that, at the request of Goran Majstorovic, the attorney appointed for the defendant, the main (?discussion) was postponed until 28 March.

On the basis of the revised indictment, and in accordance with Article 142 of the Criminal Law of the Serb Republic [words indistinct], as well as Articles 3, 32, and 33 of the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Citizens in Civil War, the defendant is charged with crimes, inhuman acts, the murder of eight Serbs, taking part in the killing of 60 more persons, and looting and destruction of Serb property, which, as member of the so-called 106th HVO Brigade, he committed in the villages in Brcko municipality during the summer of 1992.

B-H: AFP Names 57 Indicted by Hague Tribunal

AU2203175796 Paris AFP in English
1734 GMT 22 Mar 96

[All names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Hague, March 22 (AFP)—UN war crimes prosecutors' indictment of three Bosnian Moslems on rape, torture and murder charges on Friday brought to 57 the number of people accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia.

Four suspects named on Friday, who include the first Moslems accused of committing atrocities during Bosnia's almost four-year war, were identified as Zejnil Delalic, 48, Zdravko "Pavo" Mucic, 51, Hazim Delic, 31; and Esad "Zenga" Landzo, 23. It was unclear which of the suspects were Bosnian Moslems.

According to the tribunal, 53 others are accused of "serious violations of the Geneva Conventions," "violations of the laws or customs of war," "crimes against humanity" or "genocide."

Only two of them are in custody near The Hague. They are Djordje Djukic and Dusko Tadic.

A third, Goran Lajic, was arrested on Monday in southern Germany.

The 50 others still at large are as follows:

Zlatko Aleksovski, Mirko Babic, Nenad Banovic, Predrag Banovic, Tihofil (Tihomir) Blaskic, Goran Borovnica, Mario Cerkez, Ranko Cesic, Damir Dosen, Dragan Fustar, Zdravko Govedarica, Momcilo Gruban, (first name unknown) Gruban, Nikica Janjic, Goran Jelisic, Radovan Karadzic, Dusan Knezevic, Dragan Kondic, Dario Kordic, Milojica Kos, Predrag Kostic, Dragan Kulundzija, Miroslav Kvocka, Milan Martic, Ratko Mladic, Zeljko Meakic, Slobodan Miljkovic, Milan Mrksic, Dragan Nikolic, Nedjeljko Paspalj, Milan Pavlic, Milutin Popovic, Dragoljub Prcac, Drazenko Predojevic, Miroslav Radic, Mladen Radic, Ivica Rajic, Ivan Santic, Dragomir Saponja, Zeljko Savic, Dusko Sikirica, Blagoje Simic, Milan Simic, Pero Skopljak, Veselin Sljivancanin, Miroslav Tadic, Nedjeljko Timarac, Stevan Todorovic, Simo Zaric and Zoran Zigic.

B-H: Bildt Criticizes Muslims for Holding Back POW's

LD2403115196 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1047 GMT 24 Mar 96

["Pool" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Belgrade, Mar 24 (TANJUG)—By releasing 109 Serbs from the prison in Tuzla, northeastern Bosnia, the Muslim government has only partially fulfilled its commitment's under the Dayton Accords, representatives of the International [Committee of the] Red Cross said.

Even the international community's high representative for Bosnia, Carl Bildt, was not satisfied by the partial release of imprisoned Serbs.

"The office of the high representative does not consider the partial release of this number of prisoners to constitute the full compliance with the terms of the Dayton Accords," Bildt's spokesman Colum Murphy said in Sarajevo reported by REUTER. He said that Muslims were still holding 26 Serbs prisoner in Tuzla.

Murphy said they were examining measures which would lead to the compliance with the Dayton Accords.

The Moscow Contact Group Meeting on Saturday warned all the sides in Bosnia to release their prisoners or face the possible delay or loss of post-war reconstruction funding being provided by international donors.

Under the Dayton Accords the deadline for the release of the prisoners of war was January 19.

B-H: Muslims Free 109 Serbs; Over 100 Still Held

AU2403135996 Paris AFP in English 1220 GMT 24 Mar

[By Adrian Brown]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarajevo, March 24 (AFP)—Bosnian authorities freed over 100 Serb prisoners early Sunday, but scores were still held by the three sides in Bosnia, according to the International Red Cross.

The mainly Moslem government was the only side to release any prisoners, despite a deadline demanding the release of all PoWs in Bosnia by midnight (2300 GMT) Saturday.

Monitored by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 109 Serbs were freed at a bridge marking the boundary between the territories of the Serb republic and Moslem-Croat federation, the two halves of Bosnia.

The prisoners, including two men on stretchers, left the regional jail in Tuzla, northeast Bosnia, in two buses and a pair of trucks late Saturday evening. They were led across the bridge, near Gracanica, a government-held town northwest of Tuzla in in double file after being kept waiting in the cold while the transfer was formalised.

"Tonight they will be reunited with their families," said Laurent Fellay, of the ICRC, which coordinated the release.

NATO's ground commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker, said he welcomed the releases but said they fell short of the pledge to free everyone. "The release of 109 prisoners last night...cannot be considered to be full compliance until all are freed," he said in a written statement.

Some 104 men are still held in custody the Red Cross said. 51 Moslems are held in Mostar, southern Bosnia by the Bosnian Croats while 28 Moslems are still in Serb custody. The government authorities have 26 people in their hands. All have been registered by the ICRC.

The question of prisoners still in detention has threatened to derail the peace process in Bosnia on several occasions.

In Moscow Saturday, the contact group on former Yugoslavia said a meeting of donor nations in mid-April on reconstruction in Bosnia would be called off if all PoWs were not freed.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said later all sides had pledged to free prisoners by March 30. If that promise was not honoured Bosnia's High Representative, Carl Bildt, would propose reprisal measures to the contact group countries of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the US.

Red Cross officials said privately that they were "not hopeful" of further releases Sunday though word had reached them that possibly 10 of the 51 Moslems, all held by the Bosnian Croats on war crimes allegations, would be freed Monday.

A Bosnian government official in charge of the exchanges said discussions with the Serb authorities were planned Sunday but he too did not expect to see any releases Sunday.

Most of those still held were charged by their captors with committing war crimes, a Red Cross official said. Ostensibly permitted by a clause in Bosnia's peace accord, all three sides have abused the so-called "Letter G" detentions, named after the relevant clause.

"It is a grey area," said a Red Cross delegate. The official said the Serbs kept back by the Bosnian government in Tuzla had been regular PoWs until late Saturday, "when we were suddenly told the men were being held as possible war crimes suspects."

Earlier this year, all sides agreed to submit all such allegations to the International War Crimes so as to avoid abuses but this was not happening diplomats said. "The Croats for example, probably don't have 51 war criminals. When pressured they hint they will free 10. It's a game," one western envoy said.

B-H: Bosnian Serbs Release Muslim Journalist

LD2503111096 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 1042 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sarajevo, 25 March (SRNA)—Muslim photojournalist Hidajet Delic was released today in line with a decision by [Bosnian] Serb Republic President Radovan Karadzic on the lifting of criminal charges.

Milenko Karisik, Serb Republic deputy interior minister, and Dragan Bulajic, chairman of the Serb Commission for the Exchange of Prisoners, handed over Delic in Pale to Michael Steiner, the deputy high representative of the international community for civilian affairs.

Delic was arrested by military security officers in Grbavica on 8 February.

B-H: Talks Held on Release of Prisoners

LD2403182196 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 1723 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sarajevo, 24 Mar (SRNA)—Momcilo Krajisnik, [Bosnian] Serb People's Assembly speaker, had talks today in Pale with Michael Steiner, the UN High Representative deputy, on further stages leading to release of all detainees from prisons.

According to unofficial sources, the Serb side demanded that the Muslims release 20 Serb fighters from Tuzla, captured in September 1996 on Vozuca, as well as the release of 55 prisoners being held in the Croat prison in Mostar.

There are still around 40 Serbs in prisons in the Republic of Croatia, although according to some information, that figure is around 200.

According to information available to SRNA, the Muslim and Croat side demand the delivery of 28 prisoners, out of which 14 are from Croatia, five were arrested after Dayton, and investigations are being held against nine.

B-H: Serbs Demand Simultaneous Release of Prisoners

LD2403211096 Belgrade TANJUG in English 2050 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pale, March 24 (TANJUG)—The Republika Srpska (RS) turned down on Sunday a proposal by a representative of the international community on a partial release of prisoners of war, demanding that all prisoners be released at the same time.

The issue of the release of remaining prisoners, who were to have been released by all three sides by January 19 under the Dayton Accord, was discussed here by RS Parliament Speaker Momcilo Krajisnik and Michael Steiner, assistant to High Representative Carl Bildt.

An appeal to all sides to release all remaining prisoners of war was issued by the five-nation contact group at a meeting in Moscow on Saturday.

Krajisnik and Steiner did not make any statements after the meeting but TANJUG has learned that the Serb side insisted on involving Croatia in the process of release. RS prisoners are held in Croatian prisons and the International Committee [ICRC] of the Red Cross has registered them.

Officials of the ICRC and Carl Bildt's bureau said Sunday that Muslim authorities had only partially fulfilled obligations in the Dayton accord by releasing 109 Serbs from a prison in Tuzla Saturday [23 March] night.

Bildt's spokesman Colum Murphy told a news conference in Sarajevo that Muslims were still detaining 26 Serbs in Tuzla, a city in northeastern Bosnia.

B-H: Ganic: 20 Serb POW's To Be Handed Over to Hague

LD2403220996 Sarajevo Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine in Serbo-Croatian 2100 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is what Ejup Ganic, Bosnia-Herzegovina presidency member and vice president of the Federation, said about the release of POW's immediately upon his arrival in Tuzla:

[Begin Ganic recording, in English] Only those who are accused of war crimes are the responsibility of The Hague. So, all those that we keep and for whom we have evidence that they are involved in war crimes will be handed over to The Hague tribunal. I do not know for sure, I think that around 20 of them have been charged with war crimes. Everyone else was released. [end recording]

B-H: Bosnian Croats To Release 10 Serb POW's

LD2503113996 Zagreb Radio Croatia Network in Serbo-Croatian 1100 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Bosnian] Croats will today release 10 Serb POW's known not to have committed war crimes. The group will be released on the demarcation line near Kupres [central Bosnia], the HABENA [Bosnian Croat news agency] reports. The release will take place at 1500 in the presence of ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] and IFOR [Implementation Force] representatives.

According to the same source, the Bosnian Serbs are still holding prisoner 17 Croat soldiers registered by the ICRC. The Serbs admitted holding 10 Croat prisoners whom the Red Cross have not registered. In addition, they are holding four people arrested recently on the Orasje-Tuzla road.

B-H: Pale Serbs Promise To Release 28 Prisoners

AU2503131796 Paris AFP in English 1212 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarajevo, March 25 (AFP)—Bosnian Serbs will free 28 prisoners of war within the next 24 hours, Michael Steiner, deputy to Bosnia's High Representative said Monday [25 March].

Steiner, second to Carl Bildt, who is responsible for civilian aspects of the Bosnian peace process, said he received the pledge during a Monday morning meeting with the Serbs.

At their Pale stronghold, just east of Sarajevo, Steiner said he received a "commitment this morning that by tomorrow 28 prisoners...would be released." However, he cautioned: "We have to see if it really happens."

So far, only the mainly Moslem Bosnian Government authorities have freed any prisoners of war, in line with pledges made by Balkan leaders to resolve the PoW issue.

The Bosnian Serbs freed Monday a Moslem journalist arrested in February on charges of committing war crimes.

Ten people are expected to be freed by the Bosnian Croats later Monday, a Red Cross official who requested anonymity told AFP. Just over 100 prisoners are currently held by the three sides. On Sunday, some 109 Serbs were freed by the government.

B-H: Official: Muslims Refuse To Release 19 Tuzla POW's

LD2503141996 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 1318 GMT 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brcko, 25 Mar (SRNA)—The Muslim side has refused to release 19 Serb POW's from Tuzla prison, Makso Simeunovic, chairman of the commission for the exchange of prisoners of the Bosnian Serb Army's Eastern Bosnia Corps, told SRNA today.

The Muslims are justifying their refusal to free the Serb POW's by claiming that war crimes charges are being brought against them.

The Muslims yesterday released from Tuzla prisons 109 Serbs—mostly from the Doboj area—who crossed over to Serb territory at the Gracanica control point. [passage omitted]

Croatia: Progress Made at Granic-Milutinovic Meeting

AU2403192096 Belgrade NASA BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 13 Mar 96 p 8

[Commentary by Vladan Marjanovic: "Zagreb-Belgrade via Vukovar"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Monday [11 March] afternoon, while in Zagreb the second round of talks between the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Croatia, Mate Granic, and the head of Yugoslav diplomacy Milan Milutinovic, was taking place, three gloomy people entered the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Zrinjevac. Not really expecting to get a positive answer, they asked if, when the ministers came before the journalists, they could try to find out something from the horse's mouth about the destiny of their relatives who, as they said, had disappeared in Vukovar.

An employee of the ministry said, of course, that was not possible, and—saying he was sorry for not being able to help them in any way—he asked them to leave the building. Later, in a much more official tone, he told a colleague of his from the security to take care that nothing similar to that happened again.

Several hours later, when the complete Croatian and Yugoslav negotiating teams finally appeared before the journalists with signed records—the atmosphere was completely different. Everybody was well-disposed and smiling, and (and this is not insignificant when it concerns Serbs and Croats) it seemed that in those smiles there was no affectation; with their evaluations of the talks Ministers Granic and Milutinovic confirmed that impression. The latter in particular, who said about the relations between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that they were "not ordinary bilateral relations, but, to a significant extent, special relations," and that the Yugoslav side would "try to keep them like that in the future."

And indeed, regardless of how much caution is required because of previous experience, one could say that, through the mutual visits of the two foreign ministers, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (which, contrary to the terminology used by Minister Granic the day before yesterday, is still "the so-called" for the Croatian border service, and certainly not only for them) definitely made those deciding first steps which lead to gradual full normalization of relations; and, regardless of all possible obstructions and a whole number of problems, from Prevlaka to the issue of succession, the doubtlessly toilsome process of confidence-building (at least on the official level), viewed in the long run, can no longer be avoided, or transformed into something opposite. The reason it cannot be avoided is certainly not because there are no such people whom, out of various reasons, something like that would suit, but simply because it is in the political, in the strategic, and, as Minister Milutinovic stated, after all, in the vital interest of both countries.

Croatia and Yugoslavia have decided to start on the way of reconciliation. Great. What remains is for someone to explain to those people, who, on Monday afternoon, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wanted to find out from the two ministers what had happened to their relatives, why it was that Serbs and Croats first had to quarrel in such a bloody way.

Croatia: UNTAES Gen Schoups on Troop Deployment

AU2303161896 Belgrade Radio Beograd Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] General Joseph Schoups, commander of the military part of the UNTAES [UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia], held a news conference in Erdut. Bogdan Rkman has the details:

[Rkman] The Erdut agreement is not the best, but it is the only chance for peace. Gen. Schoups pointed out that it is an agreement signed by the interested sides in the interest of all sides. The basic task of the UN troops in the Srem-Baranja Region is to create peace for all future generations, the Belgian Army general said.

The construction of the military part of the UNTAES which is headed by Gen. Schoups will number 5,000 soldiers. Currently, there are about 2,000 in the region, and the rest will be deployed during April. The last to arrive in the region will be soldiers from Jordan and Pakistan, who will be the most numerous, and Gen. Schoups expects them to be deployed by 5 May. Apart from these units of the Pakistani and Jordanian armies, units from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, and Ukraine will take part in the current composition that is dominated by Russians and Belgians and is planned to create peace in the region within a year or two.

Gen. Schoups also acquainted the journalists with the deployment of the UNTAES troops. The sector between Darda and the Drava River in Baranja will be controlled by Pakistani soldiers. Creating peace in the region south of the Drava towards Vukovar apart from the Belgians and Russians will be the helicopter units from the (Plisa) Airport and the Ukrainian Army tank units that will be located in Dalj. According to what Gen. Schoups said today, the Jordanians will be responsible for the region south of Vukovar.

Speaking about demilitarization that is the first link in the chain of the peace process and pointing out its being based on volunteerism, the Belgian general pointed out that all weaponry will leave the region or be collected by the UN soldiers.

Croatia: Accused Croat General To Go to The Hague 29 Mar

*AU2403140896 Paris AFP in English
1046 GMT 24 Mar 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zagreb, March 24 (AFP)—General Tihomir Blaskic will be the first Croat to face war crimes charges after the war in Bosnia when he appears voluntarily Friday [29 March] at the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague, his lawyer was quoted as saying Sunday.

The newspaper Vjesnik quoted the attorney, Zvonimir Hodak, as saying Blaskic was "the first of the Croats charged by the tribunal to wish to go there voluntarily."

Blaskic and five other Croats were charged in November. The former Yugoslav army officer was commanding Bosnian Croat units when 100 Moslem civilians were massacred on April 18, 1993 at the village of Ahmici in central Bosnia.

The tribunal had "no proof that General Blaskic gave orders (at Ahmici) and neither does any concrete example of him actually having done so appear in his indictment," the lawyer was quoted Sunday as saying.

Friday's tribunal session would decide whether the accused was to be remanded in custody or otherwise kept under surveillance. Blaskic would not actually face the judges on Friday, though he was scheduled to present himself at the tribunal.

The lawyer said the defence was trying to have Blaskic given the opportunity of residence at an address under surveillance and protected by Dutch police. The defence team would be made up of seven Croat and Bosnian lawyers.

The attorney said the trial was important for Croatia because "it is in its interests to prove that this country is against genocide...and that Croats are not war criminals.

"If Croats sometimes went beyond the limits of the permissible in self-defence during the war, this was not Zagreb's policy and certainly not the intention of General Blaskic," he added.

On Friday UN war crimes prosecutors indicted three Bosnian Moslems on rape, torture and murder charges, the first time Moslems have been charged with committing atrocities during Bosnia's almost four-year war.

The tribunal accused the three of carrying out attacks on detainees at the Celebici prison camp in central Bosnia between early 1992 and the end of that year.

Friday's accusations brought to 57 the number of men who have been indicted on war crimes following the bloody break-up of the former Yugoslavia, but only two are currently in custody.

Croatia: Possible Successors to Defense Minister Viewed

*AU2503140696 Zagreb GLOBUS in Serbo-Croatian
22 Mar 96 p 5*

[Article by Davor Butkovic: "Who Will Replace Gojko Susak If He Is Not Able To Discharge Defense Minister's Duties Because of Serious Illness?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We really cannot confirm what Minister Gojko Susak suffers from. We will not comment on the reports about his illness in the press because we think that is Susak's private affair. I cannot even think of a way of writing a report saying that the defense minister suffers from this or that disease—we were told at the Government's Public Relations Office, on Tuesday, 19 March, when we tried to check the report, rumored in Zagreb for some time and already published in several papers, that Defense Minister Gojko Susak is seriously ill.

The news of the real reasons for Susak's departure for the military hospital in Washington is some kind of culmination of the dramatic events at the Ministry of Defense, but also an event of the highest state and party importance.

Minister Susak went for medical treatment in the United States almost at the same time as, finally, after three months of announcements, the orders for the biggest ever changes in the Croatian Army were signed.

By those orders, de facto, most of the most senior officers who came from the JNA [Yugoslav People's Army] to the National Guard in 1991, and who played a huge part in the liberation war and defense of Croatia in the autumn and winter of 1991, have been eliminated from the HV [Croatian Army].

Only Generals Petar Stipetic and Franjo Feldi, and the chief of the Fifth Administration of the Defense Ministry (military intelligence service), Admiral Davor Domazet, are the main commanders of the liberation war who had served in the JNA and are still actively involved in the Croatian Army.

General Antun Tus has on many occasions spoken up about discrimination against officers who came from the JNA. At least twenty other former Yugoslav officers have told the editors of GLOBUS that in the last six months, and even those commanders—like Staff Admiral Sveto Letica (we must point out that the action to remove him from office has gone on for at least two and a half years now)—who have never been in conflict with President Tudjman, have not succeeded in avoiding retirement.

"It is all nonsense. General Antun Tus is a very dear man, who really performed a great service for Croatia in 1991. Tus is very educated and capable," one of Minister Susak's closest associates told the editors of GLOBUS on Saturday, 16 March.

"You must understand that he is simply obsessed with Susak. In the last four years, his only ambition was to reduce the defense minister's influence on the president and supreme commander.

Disappointed General Dzanko

"Tus did not want mediation of the Ministry of Defense between the president and the General Staff. He wanted to exert his own influence on the president, he wanted to deal with policy," Susak's associate (whose name, reasonably, we cannot disclose) appraises, and continues:

"Davor Domazet is the best example that the officers who have come from the JNA are not discriminated against in the Croatian Army. Domazet was, literally, the brains of our victorious operations last spring and summer. Our commanders on the ground followed Domazet's estimations. Probably the most important thing is that we have had almost perfect intelligence: we have defeated the Serbs already at that level."

Apart from all that, Domazet is one of those staff officers who have distinguished themselves on the front lines. Although an admiral and chief of the intelligence service, Domazet has participated in the operations in the front lines of the battlefield, GLOBUS's collocutor continues, trying to argue the Defense Ministry's official thesis that the removals from office in the Croatian Army have not been politically motivated and that they are not directed against the officers who have come to the HV from the JNA.

Beside General Tus, hero of the liberation war, who, apart from the expected decree on his retirement, also expected promotion to a staff general, the highest rank in the Croatian Army (held now only by Janko Bobetko and Sveto Letica), such argumentation is accepted neither by General Luka Dzanko, one of the commanders of Operations Flash and Storm, until recently the commander of the Bjelovar Corps District, who also has expected a promotion.

General Dzanko, as a JNA lieutenant-colonel, has gone over to the National Guard. He has been the commander of the units that in 1991 opened fire on Knin with 130-mm artillery.

Luka Dzanko hoped that, within the president's decision on appointments, dismissals, and retirements, he would be appointed commander of the Ston Corps District.

Instead, listening to the radio, he learned that he was to be retired.

The offense taken by the true heroes of the liberation war who were retired a couple of days ago, and the arguments of Gojko Susak's associate that those were the people who had tried to get involved in politics, or who were not needed for the peacetime organization of the army, have become relatively unimportant in comparison with the political consequences that could be caused by Gojko Susak's longer absence from office as defense minister.

Susak, a Herzegovinian from Siroki Brijeg, who once naively told the JERUSALEM POST that both his father and uncle had been Ustashe, who was smuggled out in the early seventies by the Herzegovina friars across the Yugoslav border and taken care of by them in Austria before he emigrated to Canada and who hid pistols and carbine rifles (property of Croatian National Resistance) in the refrigerator in his pizzeria, has become, in the last year, despite his utterly strange views of democracy, human rights, rule of law, and the organization of Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of the most important factors of political stability in Croatia.

It is a fact that Susak, despite all the reasonable complaints of some generals from the Croatian Army General Staff, is a successful defense minister, because, after all, the final outcome of the war proves that.

The fact is that Susak, at least at the public level, has disengaged himself from the political conflicts in the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Community]. Recently, he has not at all been leader of one of the warring factions (like at the time of the conflict with Mesic, Manolic, and Degoricija), but he, unlike Vukojevic or Seks, has expressed his full loyalty to the so-called central state policy, that is, to the decisions of President Tudjman.

It is particularly important that Susak is the only politician President Tudjman can send from Zagreb to Herzegovina with realistic chances that he would settle the most complicated political disagreements in that most Croat part of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

For instance, in official statements as well, like the interview of Mate Granic in the SLIKOM NA SLIKU TV broadcast, it has been admitted that at the meeting in Geneva on Monday, there was a very temperamental discussion during the bilateral negotiations between the Croats and Muslims.

Susak is the only Croatian politician, beside President Tudjman himself, who can always temper the overheated Croatian temperament in such negotiations.

Specifically, although Susak was the fiercest advocate of Herzeg-Bosnia as a state, and its annexation to the Republic of Croatia later on, he is at the same time the only politicians who was able to make the Herzegovinians give up Herzeg-Bosnia.

Furthermore, he enjoys great confidence with a part of the U.S. military and political leadership. Susak's unusually warm and utterly friendly reception with U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry testifies to this. It is also confirmed by the engagement of the best U.S. generals, like George Vuomo [as published] (who is mentioned by Four Star General Colin Powell, commander of the U.S. Army at the time of the war against Iraq and most probably a vice-presidential candidate, as his mentor), in the education of the Croatian Army.

The fact that Susak has been defense minister for more than four years is today very important for both the party inside, as well as for general internal political stability.

The Race Has Already Started?

General Kresimir Cosic, antiarmor rocket constructor, who has recently been appointed deputy defense minister, in place of the discredited veterinarian Josip Juras, has been given that prestigious job precisely because President Tudjman did not want to politicize the question of Susak's possible heir.

Cosic is an utterly apolitical technocrat with an ambiguous reputation in expert circles.

Had, instead of General Cosic, any distinguished HDZ official been appointed deputy minister of defense, the general public would immediately start speculating about the race to catch the seat of Susak's heir.

True, if the reports on Susak's illness are correct, that race has already begun, although those who see themselves as the main candidates will not make their opinion public for the time being.

For the time being, both Croatia without Gojko Susak as defense minister, and the HDZ without him as one of the most influential members, are radically destabilized.

Susak's unexpected [illness that] prevented him from discharging a series of the most responsible duties opens a number of political questions: starting from who will fight his way to the position of the most influential presidential associate (in the competition among several really dangerous politicians), over the stability of international contacts provided by Susak, to the political stability of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In short, even if we take into account all the justified objections in the last couple of years directed against him, Gojko Susak is an incomparably more useful and serious politician than Vladimir Seks, Vice Vukojevic, or Luka Bebic.

Croatia: Deputy Defense Minister on NATO Standards

AU2503091196 Zagreb HRVATSKI OBZOR in Serbo-Croatian 18 Mar 96 pp 18-19

[Interview with Croatian Deputy Defense Minister General Kresimir Cosic by Jozo Curic in Zagreb; date not given: "Croatian Army With NATO Standards"]

[FBIS Translated Text] General Kresimir Cosic, D.Sc., was born in Zagreb on 23 October 1949. He graduated from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Zagreb, and gained his master's and doctoral degrees there. He has worked as an associate professor at the Department of Rocket Technology of the Technical Military Academy, as well as at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Zagreb, and as guest researcher at the Aerospace Department of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The results of his scientific work have been presented at a number of international conferences all over Europe and America, and have been published in the world's leading scientific journals. His expert and scientific activity is particularly important for the development and modernization of the defense system of the Republic of Croatia.

In June 1991, he began to cooperate with President's Office on various questions that were important for the establishment of the defense system of the Republic of Croatia. As the war grew fiercer, in September 1991, he joined ZNG [National Guard]. He then started to work on the organization and establishment of the Croatian Army antitank units. During the period of fighting between 1991 and 1995, he was on many battlefields. Since the end of 1992, he has been an adviser on antitank warfare for Croatian Army Chief of Staff General Janko Bobetko, and he is today actively involved in modernization of that particularly important part of HV [Croatian Army].

As the defense minister's adviser, he headed the MORH [Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia] Expert Team for the Succession of the Military Assets of the Former JNA [Yugoslav Peoples' Army] within the framework of the negotiations in Brussels under the auspices of the United Nations and the EU. He established the MORH Military and Technical Council, and in 1993 was appointed its president. He is the head of the specialist postgraduate university study "Leading and Governing Movable Objects" for the needs of the defense system. He is the president of the Defense Minister's Council for Education. General Kresimir Cosic coordinates bilateral military cooperation with the United States and other countries.

[Curic] What will you be doing most as the deputy defense minister?

[Cosic] Considering the complexity of the questions the Croatian Army faces, I believe that, with my expert knowledge and experience, I can help in the military and technical development and modernization of the Croatian Army, the introduction of modern technologies, as well as in the processes of strategic planning. These are the preconditions for the long-term development of the Croatian Army. Our objective is to meet the conditions set by NATO—different standards, compatibility of equipment, and interoperability of units. I have spent five years in the HV, not only in Zagreb, but also on the ground. It is important to determine which lines to follow in order to achieve our objectives both in the technical and in professional development, choice of personnel, by obtaining all the things that we are short of.

[Curic] Can you explain to us laymen where the Croatian Army is headed for?

[Cosic] The President of the Republic has defined that clearly and precisely in his epistle—we are headed West, we want compatibility with NATO. Compatibility is a complex problem, not only in the technical, but also in the organizational sense. We must meet certain standards, establish certain procedures, doctrine, strategy, structure, way of issuing orders, integration of army, training, and education. It is a well-defined objective that has to be analyzed to the minute component in order that the system can satisfy all the conditions.

[Curic] Do you agree with the statements of some NATO officers that the Croatian Army is undergoing the most rapid development in the world?

[Cosic] The rate of development and the capability of an army is best assessed in the conditions we have had here in Croatia, not in the conditions of training and education. Early in 1991, all the appraisals of the experts and appropriate institutions said that the JNA could solve the problem in Croatia and Slovenia in 15 days, and it is a fact that four years later Croatia solved the problem in a very short time. And in a very successful and efficient way. If that period is a criterion, it is a fact that no modern army has succeeded in such a short period of time.

[Curic] What will change in the Croatian Army in peacetime development?

[Cosic] The task we were confronted with in 1991 demanded the choice of strategy that had to bring success in combat. Certain solutions have been conditioned by a time limit. Any other strategy would have complicated the procedure, the periods of time would be extended and prolonged, we would not have achieved the results we actually had. A very clear, precise, consistent, and pragmatic strategy has enabled the HV to become in a relatively short time a very successfully combat ready and efficient army. After that strategy conditioned by the war, I believe that we are now in a peacetime period of long-term development of the HV, the time intervals are not that short any longer, new criteria, new standards, new management, and organization have been imposed. The crucial and essential processes are now governed in a new way. We have entered those processes well organized, and we observe the experiences of the developed world. We have started our project for the long-term development of the Croatian Army, with a very clear and concrete task to answer how the Croatian Army will look like in the year 2000, and then to determine the directions of the long-term development.

[Curic] What kind of project is that?

[Cosic] That is an organized and coordinated effort of all parts, of both the General Staff, and the Ministry of Defense, which has to do with the definition of the strategic planning of development of all parts of HV, of branches and aspects, training, education, structure of forces, modernization, infrastructure, professional development, of everything that makes an army a well-balanced whole. Initiated by the Minister of Defense Gojko Susak, this project was prepared as early as a year ago, at the time when we still did not have all the necessary conditions. When the circumstances for thinking about strategic or long-term development had not yet been created, that was a part of our strategic vision. At the moment when the HV solved—let us hope it is really so—its part of the military tasks, the minister issued an order to start the project of long-term planning. As early as October, we started the preparations in that sense, and I believe that in the next five years the Croatian Army will move in the direction of a contemporary, modern, professional, well-equipped army that will satisfy all criteria.

[Curic] Does that apply also to the military industry?

[Cosic] Yes. Perhaps it is better to say "defense system." It involves both the HV and the infrastructure, all the segments, industrial capability, the capability of science, education, research, and the capability of technologies. I would say that there have rarely been occasions to talk about the complexity of the defense system, it belongs to all spheres of our society—to the university, the Ministry of Science.

[Curic] In what way will you organize responsibility for the cutbacks in Croatia's military budget?

[Cosic] We are all aware of the need to essentially reduce the budget, in peacetime conditions. The definition of the HV's tasks is a part of strategic planning, in order to achieve what is written in the epistle of the President of the Republic, in order, for instance, to be able to participate with NATO units in various peace operations efficiently and at the same level. We will be planning funds, changes (in the infrastructure, organization, and production) necessary for the modernization of the HV. We will clearly find out what budget in what period of time can realize our objectives.

[Curic] How important for Croatia is the "Equip and Train" project?

[Cosic] There are needs and possibilities for modernizing the army of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and we in Croatia are interested in opportunities to, in a certain way, modernize the HV, too. As the general public knows, the project of the succession of the military assets has failed, and the military assets of the former JNA have been estimated at some $74 billion (according to the expert opinion and analysis of the UN and the EU, to which Croatia contributed in a large degree). Croatia is interested in the mechanisms and forms through which Croatia can compensate for what it has lost. In the long run, not through outdated arms, which is not in line with our objectives, but through arms that can contribute to our becoming harmonized with Western military institutions. We are interested in compensation for the infrastructure, technology, military industry (90 percent of it was situated in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and only 6 percent in Croatia).

[Box 1, p 19]

[Curic] Are you a uniformed academic?

[Cosic] No, I definitely quit my academic work in 1991, although, when I came to Croatia, they said to me: "Go back to America, it will all be over in two months, so you will be more useful there!" Today it is impossible to find time to be successful both as a scientist and as a deputy minister of defense. With the experience I have, I can say what science should be doing in order to be useful to the HV, but also vice versa, what the HV must do in order to be up to date and achieve the standards we aspire to.

FYROM: Albright Opens Embassy, Meets Gligorov

LD2303171796 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1608 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Skopje, 23 Mar (TANJUG)—Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, today attended the opening ceremony for the U.S. embassy in Skopje, capital of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM].

Before the ceremony, she handed to FYROM President Kiro Gligorov a letter from U.S. President Bill Clinton, which says that relations between Washington and Skopje, following the establishment of diplomatic ties last September, were gaining in intensity through different aspects of mutually beneficial cooperation.

A statement on the meeting expressed the shared belief that U.S. support for the independent and democratic development of FYROM and its economic stabilization would continue.

Gligorov and Albright positively assessed the presence of UN peacekeepers, including the U.S. battalion in FYROM, underlining the need for the extension of their mandate.

Gligorov spoke in favor of the efficient implementation of the peace process in Bosnia and the comprehensive application of the Dayton agreement, "welcoming President Clinton's efforts in this respect."

After the meeting with Gligorov, Albright held separate talks with Foreign Minister Ljubomir Frckovski and Defense Minister Blagoj Handziski.

The U.S. envoy and the FYROM defense minister said that mutual ties in the area of defense and security were "extremely successful and had lasting foundations."

The U.S. ambassador this morning visited the U.S. battalion of UNPREDEP [UN Preventive Deployment Force in Macedonia].

FYROM: Handziski Invites Greece to War Games

LD2203211196 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 2017 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Skopje, 22 Mar (TANJUG)—Blagoj Handziski, the defense minister of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM], has invited Greece to take part with its Armed Forces in a joint military exercise to be held in the FYROM in October as part of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

The invitation was handed over by Handziski today to Alexandros Malias, the head of the Greek Liaison Office in Skopje.

A statement issued after the meeting said that the two men had discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and the upcoming meeting of southern Balkan defense ministers in Tirana.

FYROM: Normalization of Relations With FRY Announced

LD2303171396 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1459 GMT 23 Mar 96

["Pool" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Skopje, Mar. 23 (TANJUG)—Prime Minister of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM] Branko Crvenkovski has said that normalization of relations with Yugoslavia was a priority in FYROM's foreign policy this year.

'On the plane of foreign relations, I expect us to establish diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, thereby rounding up the first stage in regulating relations with our neighbors,' Crvenkovski said in an interview published by the Skopje daily NOVA MAKEDONIJA on Saturday.

FYROM is the only former Yugoslav republic to have seceded peacefully from the former six-member federation in the winter of 1991.

FYROM: Comment: Recognition 'Even More Important' to FRY

AU2203171096 Skopje VECER in Macedonian 22 Mar 96 p 9

[Commentary by D. Ilkova-Boskovic: "We Are Done Waiting"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Skopje-Belgrade diplomatic relations have been heated up to a degree that makes our blood pressure rise. We are waiting for mutual recognition between the Republic of Macedonia [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We have heard dozens of statement from both sides—there are no obstacles to full normalization of relations. We parted in peace; there are no territorial disputes; there is no problem about anybody's name; and we recognize the desired continuity—they have recognized ours since ASNOM [Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia] in 1944, we have recognized theirs since 1919. Why can we not say that the controversy associated with "succession" has calmed down, now that Belgrade (shyly and under pressure) demonstrates the will to leave these discussions in the sphere of multilateral relations, which are to be solved through agreement? If it had not been so, they would have been expected to say that this was an unbridged obstacle to discussing recognition. Has the interstate document not been prepared for weeks? The file is closed. It is waiting to be signed. And....

"Milutinovic is coming to Skopje"; "Frckovski is going to Belgrade to sign"; "Milosevic in Skopje tomorrow"; "Normalization of Skopje-Belgrade relations during this week" (for the seventh time).... We have just mentioned a few of the headlines with which the mass media has been exclusively "raiding" the people for weeks. What strikes the eye is that they regularly rely on dependable diplomatic sources from the Macedonian Foreign Ministry, that these pieces of information are regularly broadcast by the FRY mass media, and that they have never been denied from over there. This week, their Minister Djordje Siradovic sent Milosevic to us, and we could also hear that he [Milosevic] was coming at his own request, with the intention of announcing mutual recognition together with President Kiro Gligorov, after which the respective foreign ministers, that is, Frckovski and Milutinovic, would sign the document. If it has not grown moldy already.

We attached so much importance to Serbian President Milosevic, as if everything had depended on him, although we and the world have long ago removed his spider web. However, it is not his fault if we have become his spokesman, and if we wait every morning to see whether he wakes up with the good will to pay us a visit. Why not? If he had paid somebody to advertise him this much there might have been some mistakes, perhaps in the regular informing.

Mutual recognition is certainly important to us, as it will close the circle in the whole process with our immediate neighbors. However, it is even more important for Milosevic, because the FRY has yet to start this process. That is why it is understandable if we wait for recognition, but it is absurd that it we are the ones who are constantly waiting and raising our blood pressure for no reason! It is high time for somebody to say that we are done with waiting! We can continue with our lives, because we have been relieved of a big burden, and because our present positions are of lively importance to us, regardless of when we exchange ambassadors with Belgrade!

FYROM: Country Focused on Europe Rather Than on Region

AU2503112096 Skopje PULS in Macedonian 22 Mar 96 p 6

[Article by Eleonora Karanfilovska: "Europeanization, No Regionalization"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At all schools and courses of journalism, a seemingly unimportant detail in the subject "The Theory and Practice of Journalism" is studied with great attention. It is a detail that in some cases can be of utmost importance—that detail is the role of the comma. It is no exaggeration to say that it is sometimes a matter of life or death. There was a sentence, for instance, last century, and it went as follows: "Release, not execute!" The writer moved the comma and wrote: "Release not, execute!" This comma decided the fate of the miserable wretch who would have continued to live had it not been for the comma.

If you now move the comma in the headline of this text you will get the opposite of the first concept: "Europeanization no, regionalization!" These two concepts have been circulating as the opposite poles in the same process, and sometimes they are differently understood.

This week has been an extremely important one for the Republic of Macedonia [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] in terms of foreign affairs. It has been important in several key areas—the EU, NATO, and the United States—though the other discussions with the state's important economic partners on the bilateral plane have been no less important. However, we separate the three, particularly because of the timing, which made it possible for Macedonia to explain in direct contacts its view on Europeanization and the modalities for accomplishing it, which is contrary to the proposed regional concept on the economic and political plane, while on the other hand, it put forward a new accent on the expansion of the Alliance [NATO] and the reinforcement of the southern European wing. A lot of activity on this plane could be noted in the past weeks as well, although at that time it was associated more with ideas on Balkan conferences, Balkan rallies on various foundations, and even Balkan integration, and before inclusion in Europe.

Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov's meeting in Skopje with Susanna Agnelli, EU chairperson and Italian Foreign Minister, was an occasion for facing two concepts and exposing arguments—we quote the release of the president's office—"the Republic of Macedonia cannot accept any imposed ideas for new and uncertain economic or any other associations, particularly not in the territories of the former SFRY [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]." This, in fact, is the Macedonian response to the EU Ministerial Council's recent decision on a regional approach to reconstruction and cooperation with the countries of former Yugoslavia. Minister Agnelli made a statement in which she additionally explained that "when the EU talks about a regional approach, it means that whenever EU financial aid to the former Yugoslav republics is discussed the countries that remained outside the conflict are not exempted. Here, it is above all referring to Macedonia and Albania." (By the way, Italy is preparing a "Meeting on identification" as a follow up to the London Conference of December and its decisions, but the goals, participants, and agenda have not yet been defined). We have inserted this in between the parts of the release of President Gligorov's office because, although by the term regional approach Italy and the EU may intend purely to simplify matters and include the countries around Bosnia and Herzegovina in the reconstruction and revitalization of regional cooperation, the dangers for the Republic of Macedonia and the region at large are great. The following sentence follows the quoted part of the release: "It would not only be contrary to the vital and long-term interests of a number of Balkan countries, but could also represent the beginning of new divisions and uncertainties in the Balkans." Let us recall, a similar regional approach was announced during the negotiations with Albania in connection with the forms of further cooperation with the Union.

So, it is vitally important for the Republic of Macedonia to explain precisely the term "evolutionary clause" for association with the EU. This means that each country will have to make its own way to integration with the Union, if it has such a political goal, and not involve itself in regional integration before integrating itself in the Union. Last week, a news conference was organized after Romanian Foreign Minister Melescanu's visit to Macedonia, when Macedonian Foreign Minister Frckovski said: "We believe that, in principle, the process of integration in Europe has to be opened for all countries, but the timing and the way will have to be determined by the timing that these countries achieve in reaching the necessary standards."

In this context, Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, after meeting with the German minister for development aid this week, stated as follows: "We fully agreed that the relations of each country must be based on bilateral cooperation without forcing or favoring any regional approach." The lobby of the Republic of Macedonia is clearly encountering views that are different from the ones that the Union has declared.

On the other hand, it has been announced that the Republic of Macedonia is putting forward a new approach toward the expansion of NATO. In brief, the solution for the expansion of the Alliance has been blocked because of Russia's objection, and it is now at the point at which there will either be a step forward or the whole idea will fail, mainly because NATO places the accent on the north, which actually means the Russian border. In the intensive visits of delegations from candidate states for association with NATO, immediately before Warren Christopher's meeting with his counterparts from Eastern and Central Europe, Russian Minister Primakov put forward a new proposal for joint Russian and NATO guarantees to Poland in Warsaw, in exchange for which it asked Poland to give up its membership to NATO, all of which was naturally rejected by Minister Rosati. So, the Macedonian idea is to start expansion from the bottom, favoring the reinforcement of the southern wing, with the admission of Macedonia, Albania, and Bulgaria. It is an offspring of an idea that has yet to be developed.

We mentioned the United States, and this is yet to come on Saturday, when the U.S. Embassy in Skopje finally starts official operations. The first ambassador [to Macedonia] has been appointed—Christopher Hill. All this was seen as a provocation in Greece, as if Washington had been "arranging" its relations with Athens through Macedonia. However, the most important thing for us is that Macedonian-U.S. relations, which have been extremely good so far, are finally being completed now.

During this intensive diplomatic week, some room was left in President Gligorov's agenda for Slobodan Milosevic, who insisted so much on being received by Mr.Gligorov. The meeting was scheduled for Thursday, but Milosevic himself suddenly canceled it on Wednesday and rescheduled it for next week. If he comes! And so...we are waiting for Slobo [Slobodan Milosevic] (until next week) without commas, but certainly with brackets.

Poland: Kwasniewski: Must Be Firm, Patient About NATO

LD2403174496 Warsaw Polskie Radio First Program Network in Polish 1700 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Aleksander Kwasniewski has said that Poland must be firm and patient in its efforts to become a member of NATO. The president, who was observing the Polish-German-Danish maneuvers "Baltic Cooperation '96" in Drawsko Pomorskie, stressed that the exercises already confirmed that Poland's membership in the North Atlantic pact was possible.

The Danish and German commanders participating in the maneuvers, which are being held as part of Partnership for Peace, assured the Polish president that they saw no obstacles to cooperation with the Polish Army. They highly assessed the equipment and the level of training of the Polish soldiers. In President Kwasniewski's opinion, this means that there are no reasons for further delaying the NATO expansion process.

Referring to recent events in Russia, the president added that much energy and time were needed to convince our neighbors that our future membership in NATO was not directed against anyone.

Poland: NATO Discussion Paper Near Completion

WS2203152096 Warsaw ZYCIE WARSZAWY in Polish 22 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by "CEG,LUZ": "MON and MSZ. Discussion Paper; Document Ready on Benefits of NATO Enlargement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "In the next few days, Poland will send a so-called discussion paper [preceding term is published in English throughout item], the document that is to provide the basis of talks with NATO, to the alliance's headquarters in Brussels. One part of the paper is devoted to political issues, the other to military ones. It points out that, by joining NATO, Poland wants not only to receive security guarantees, but also to contribute to peace and order on the continent," an anonymous official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MSZ] has told ZYCIE WARSZAWY.

The paper lists our strengths as a potential member of the alliance: economic growth, higher outlays on defense, no conflict with any other state, and treaties signed with all our neighbors. The discussion paper also deals with civilian control over the Armed Forces, pointing out the recent law on the Ministry of National Defense [MON] as a success. Our future allies found this issue the most controversial. "The times of vague declarations of our willingness to join NATO are over; now we have to act," says the MSZ officer.

The document is currently in the last phase of completion, and the final details are being worked out by the MSZ and MON.

The Czechs have already submitted their discussion paper. The MSZ and MON give assurances, however, that there is "no race between member states of the Visegrad Group." Poland simply wants to provide the best possible basis for discussion.

Poland: President Visits 'Baltic Cooperation '96'

LD2403121496 Warsaw Polskie Radio First Program Network in Polish 1105 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, President Aleksandr Kwasniewski, has arrived at the military training range in Drawsko [Koszalin Province, northern Poland], where the trilateral Polish-Danish-German military exercises "Baltic Cooperation '96" are taking place.

President Kwasniewski expressed the hope that Polish soldiers would soon be fulfilling the duties of their country as a NATO member.

Exercises, organized as part of the Partnership for Peace Program, consist of staff training in planning and organization of international peace missions.

The president is accompanied by National Defense Minister Stanislaw Dobrzanski and senior officers from Poland, Denmark, and Germany.

Poland: Auschwitz Construction of Stores Put on Hold

LD2203181396 Warsaw PAP in Polish 1408 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Warsaw, 22 March—The provincial governor of Bielsko, in conjunction with the Office of the Council of Ministers, has halted the implementation of the decision to build a trading and gastronomic complex in the protection zone of the State Museum in Auschwitz, the Government Information Center reported today. The decision was made because administrative procedures in the matter are being resumed.

Poland: Ministry Bans Imports of British Beef

LD2303101596 Warsaw Polskie Radio First Program Network in Polish 0900 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Polish Ministry of Agriculture has introduced a ban on imports of British beef.

Most European Union [EU] member states and several Asian countries have already introduced such a ban after reports that eating beef from the British Isles can cause a fatal illness of the nervous system. [passage omitted: Brussels recommends that Britain slaughter its entire herd]

Poland: U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights

WS2203155196 Warsaw TRYBUNA in Polish 22 Mar 96 p 7

[Article by Zygmunt Slomkowski: "How the United States Sees Us; An A Minus"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This month the U.S. Department of State published "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1995." The introduction names a large number of countries in which, according to the U.S. Administration, human rights are violated to varying degrees. Poland is not on that list. Several pages of the report are, however, devoted to our country. Although Poland is assessed positively, the document points to certain issues that drew the U.S. observers' fears. [passage omitted]

The report helps U.S. politicians form opinions. It gives us a high mark—an A minus, in our view. We do have to consider that minus. Things we do not consider very important (others might consider them insignificant or even unjust) are viewed very differently in the United States and have an impact on decisions that are crucial for us. Our politicians, lawmakers, and state administration officials should read this report. It is their decisions, deeds, and words that decide about the image Poland projects abroad.

Poland: Oleksy on Impending Russia-Belarus Unification

LD2303222896 Warsaw Third Program Radio Network in Polish 2200 GMT 23 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The restitution of the Soviet Union will not be advantageous for Poland. That is how Jozef Oleksy, chairman of the Social Democracy of the Polish Republic [SdRP], commented on the announced signing of the treaty on the unification of Russia and Belarus.

[Begin Oleksy recording] This does not surprise us. We do treat Belarus as an independent state with which we wish to have good interstate relations. On the other hand, the subject is a wider one, up to and including the restitution of the former Soviet Union, as the Duma recently resolved. We observe and are reacting to all the things that will, from our point of view, constitute unfavorable processes. And this resolution of the Duma is precisely so perceived by us. Fortunately, we regard it as being completely unrealistic and ineffective. [end recording]

Romania: PDSR Said Prepared To Break PUNR Alliance

AU2203210496 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 2000 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Executive Bureau of the PDSR [Party of Social Democracy of Romania] municipality organization held a meeting in Bucharest tonight. The meeting was also attended by PDSR Executive President Adrian Nastase.

The PDSR Executive Bureau has validated the candidacy of engineer Dan Voeric, general director of the Rocard Company, for the position of mayor of Bucharest Sector Five. At the end of the meeting a news conference was held, at which the speakers discussed the consequences of the PDSR declaration on the breakup of the alliance with the PUNR [Party of National Unity of Romania].

PDSR Executive President Adrian Nastase mentioned, quote, that the PSDR is currently fully prepared to break the pact with the PUNR, because the behavior of that political formation raises serious question marks concerning its capacity to understand the essential role of the act of ruling the country, unquote.

Nastase stressed that if the protocol is going to be broken, the four PUNR ministers in the cabinet will be replaced, our correspondent Maria Cristea informed us.

Romania: Funar Attacks Vacaru for Criticism of SRI Talks

AU2003202596 Bucharest ROMANIA LIBERA in Romanian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by MEDIAFAX: "Funar About Vasile Vacaru: 'One of the Most Corrupt People in the PDSR'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement made to the Cluj correspondent of the MEDIAFAX news agency, PUNR [Romanian National Unity Party] leader Gheorghe Funar said that he holds discrediting information about Senator Vasile Vacaru [chairman of the Parliament panel exerting control over the Romanian Intelligence Service], whom he considers "one of the most corrupt people in the PDSR" [Social Democracy Party of Romania]. In Funar's opinion, the aforementioned "discrediting information" could make Vacaru resign from the Senate. The statement made by Funar is in response to the stance of the PDSR senator in his capacity as chairman of the SRI [Romanian Intelligence Service] oversight panel regarding the talks recently held by Virgil Magureanu [SRI director] with the PUNR leadership [on the alleged "Hungarian peril"]. Vasile Vacaru asserted that Magureanu had broken the law by accepting to hold such talks and expressed his opinion that the SRI director might be suspended for this very reason. Funar believes that Vacaru has no idea about the country's interests or the preoccupation of the SRI, and he accuses the senator of caring more about the Hamas movement and its followers in Jordan than about Romania's problems. The PUNR leader added that the real reason Vacaru is angry is because they also tackled "delicate" corruption cases involving high-ranking officials during the Magureanu-PUNR talks.

Romania: PNL-CD President Criticizes SRI Director

AU2203211396 Bucharest JURNALUL NATIONAL in Romanian 14 Mar 96 p 7

[Article by B. Nechita: "PNL-CD Believes That the SRI Does Not Serve the Country's Interests"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The response of Virgil Magureanu, director of the Romanian Intelligence Service [SRI], after the meeting with the PUNR [Romanian National Unity Party], shows that that institution does not promote the country's policies, but rather that the SRI is in the service of certain political formations, said Niculae Cerveni, president of the PNL-CD [National Liberal Party-Democratic Convention]. The liberal leader believes that this is not the fault of the PUNR, but of Virgil Magureanu, who is compelled to answer only to the parliament. In other words, if Magureanu made such a tactless gesture, he should no longer be director of the Romanian Intelligence Service, said the PNL-CD president. In connection with the same topic, the PNL-CD leaders do not agree with the talks held between [Foreign Minister] Teodor Melescanu and [PUNR President Gheorghe] Funar either, even if the latter believes that he can advise each minister. Likewise, Cerveni expressed disagreement with the fact that his party and the MER [Romanian Ecological Movement] were not invited to the meeting that the government held with the parties represented in the parliament, when the issue of the budget was being discussed.

Romania: Nastase Explains 'Embargo' on PRM, Tudor

AU2203135596 Bucharest EVENIMENTUL ZILEI in Romanian 13 Mar 96 p 3

[Interview with Adrian Nastase, speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and the ruling PDSR's executive president, by Andra Aurora Manta; place and date not given: "Adrian Nastase Comes to Blows With C.V. Tudor!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *At the end of last week, the PDSR [Social Democracy Party of Romania] Standing Delegation decided to introduce an all-out embargo on* *relations between the principal ruling party and the PRM [Greater Romania Party]. In a press communique at the end of last week, the PDSR leaders asserted that "responsibility for the genuine interests of the country requires firm action to isolate and eliminate any kind of phenomena that could hamper the normal development of democratic political life in Romania." In the same communique, the PDSR suggests that the other political parties take joint action "to eliminate any kind of attempts made to debase the political climate." Beginning today, we are presenting the reactions of the main political parties toward the PDSR's proposal. So as to understand better what is meant by an embargo on relations with the PRM, we asked Mr. Adrian Nastase, the executive chairman of the PDSR, to grant us an interview. Here is the full text of the interview:*

[Manta] Why has the PDSR imposed this embargo on its relations with the PRM?

[Nastase] The causes that made us sever political relations with the PRM are of an essential, rather than a circumstancial nature, such as certain declarations or the comparison drawn between Zhirinovskiy and Corneliu Vadim Tudor.

Practically speaking, there are two aspects here. One aspect relates to the doctrines of our parties and the other to political behavior. The analysis that we have been doing lately shows very clearly that the PRM, through Corneliu Vadim Tudor, seeks to restore the totalitarian regime, a dictatorship in Romania. And this has nothing to do with "amusing" things or pamphlet-like newspaper articles, but rather it is an essential issue.

A further aspect is how the PDSR is being depicted in the pages of ROMANIA MARE and POLITICA [PRM publications] and here I am referring to their global assessments, not their dirty attacks against some of our leaders. They call the PDSR "a party of national treason" or a party of thieves and swindlers, a party that has betrayed its status as a left-wing political party, a party that defies reality to be seen in society, a party subservient to President Ion Iliescu, an immoral party, a party preparing monstruous coalitions, a party governing as an antinational regime, and so on.

We have analyzed the contents of the articles in question and reached the conclusion that we cannot go on for ever pretending that such articles and declarations do not exist. On the other hand, we do not wish to engage in polemics, to play in C.V. Tudor's own field, to reply each time he says something; we do not wish to tread in this dirt, this intolerable vulgarity that exceeds all limits.

Recently in a PRM newspaper I saw a cartoon of a vulgarity that goes beyond all imagination. But I repeat, eventually we had to take a certain position, a stance, and with this communique we wished to explain very clearly that we refuse to participate, even to the limited extent of engaging them in debates, in the justification of such attitudes in Romanian political life.

[Manta] In your communique you assert that your responsibility for the interests of the country requires firm action to isolate and eliminate any kind of extremist phenomena. Could this be interpreted as a message from the PDSR to the other political parties to follow your party in this respect?

[Nastase] We do not wish to incite anyone and each party, each political personality, will have to come up with its own answers about what is the best thing to do.

Anyhow, it is quite clear that actually C.V. Tudor's targets are not Ion Iliescu, Oliviu Gherman, Adrian Nastase, or any other person. His genuine targets are the very institutional structure of the country, the institutions of the law-governed state, and, in effect, our entire political system.

His attacks are directed against both the right and the left, and he equally targets, using very similar terms, people across the entire political spectrum. But, I would like to repeat, this is not a problem of those individuals, but rather one of institutions.

In practice, the idea that he permanently tries to inculcate is that of restoration, restoration based on dictatorship, contempt for democracy, which should be smashed and turn into anarchy, the idea that no one is worth anything and that the sole person able to solve the problems of the country is C.V. Tudor.

As a matter of fact, he never uses the plural when he talks about his party, he always talks in the singular, as if he were some tribune of the nation. It is true, as long as we considered that these things should be taken merely as something humorous, we did not pay too much attention, but now we might be well advised to call in some international medical experts to clear up these things, which might call the political evolution of Romania into question. We do not believe that certain things that are malfunctioning in Romania, as they do in other countries as well, can be extrapolated and used as an argument against our democratic evolution. This has nothing to do with nostalgia, but rather practicality and the idea that could expand in time, namely the idea of restoration. And I think that questions should also be asked about the methods by which such a restoration would be achieved, because he permanently advocates the idea of a coup, dealing blows, using force, ideas of violence, the idea of using force to eliminate legality and democracy both as a frame of mind and as a way to normalize society. Considering all this, I think that this phenomenon, as C.V. Tudor terms it, the Greater Romania phenomenon, ultimately may represent a virus in Romanian politics, one that needs a diagnosis and, perhaps even a cure.

Luckily, the Romanians have not developed a taste for Fuehrers!

[Manta] Could this also pose a danger for the institutions of the law-governed state?

[Nastase] Yes, definitely. Above all his idea of acting as a justice-maker, or of acting as an inspectorate over the institutions of the law-governed state. There are no such formulae in any law-governed state. No one can exert personal control; no one can pronounce verdicts or rate the performance of such institutions. No doubt, they still have to increase their authority and our laws also have to become stronger and be more efficiently applied, but all this is a process that must develop within a democratic system, rather than a process urged on by someone from behind with a whip, one whom I do not even think has the moral authority to do so.

Besides, I might also mention the credibility of people who embark on such crusades.

I have been acquainted with C.V. Tudor for nearly 30 years, so I can say I know him quite well and have had the opportunity to assess whether or not he is well intentioned. Let me give you a personal example: He, unlike those who publish ACADEMIA CATAVENCU [a political satirical publication], has been acquainted with me over the past 30 years, he has met the girlfriends whom I had 30 years ago and 20 years ago, my female schoolmates, university colleagues, and so on.

So he is perfectly aware of my sexual preferences. So the fact that he has taken over a particular issue from the ACADEMIA CATAVENCU, to my mind, is clear proof that he is malevolent. Another example: He once published offensive things about Ambassador Traian Chebeleu [presidential spokesman], for which I criticized him. I told him: "Even if these things were true, you should not have published them." He replied that he had only meant them as a joke, but in the following issue of his newspaper he published that conversation of ours. He wrote: "Adrian Nastase told me that, even if these things were true, I should not have published them." This also serves to prove that he is unscrupulous.

I find it very hard to accept such a person as a moral judge of society. What I find extremely dangerous are his attacks against our institutions, the presidency, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate....

The Senate was all right with him as long as he was the secretary of its Standing Bureau. However, after he failed to be reelected to that office, he did not accept the results of the democratic ballot on his replacement. That is, he does not accept losing power. This is something that should cause a great deal of concern.

The way in which he reacted to this could be interpreted as an example of how C.V. Tudor would act once he were able to seize power.

How could I believe what C.V. Tudor says and does, as I am well aware of what he did before 1989, and I know very well the results of his travels abroad with our soccer teams, flying chartered aircraft, including that business with the video cassettes, the increase in the number of video cassettes circulating in Bucharest [reference to allegations that Tudor made a fortune by smuggling pornographic videos into the country]?!

How could it be possible for this political poacher to take on the role of gamekeeper in Romanian society?

I believe that Vadim has gone beyond all acceptable limits, and, regardless of these minor personal foibles, which I have often deliberately ignored in our relations with the PRM, what seems to be significant and important right now is his call for restoration, dictatorship, use of force, and disrespect for others. He is trying to create an autistic world with a personality cult, a false world consisting of the letters written to him by the readers of his newspapers and his supporters. Of course, politics breeds monsters and, unfortunately, this is yet more proof that absolute power corrupts absolutely, as in politics corruption does not solely mean offering and accepting bribes but also perversion of the mind and soul of this kind.

[Manta] You have recently said that Vadim prefers to act as a justice-maker rather than someone subject to justice. I would like you to comment on this.

[Nastase] I find this a very appropriate description. If Vadim really had evidence to bring certain people to justice, he should present that evidence in court rather than hide behind the screen of parliamentary immunity.

He acts like a child who throws snowballs at passers-by in the street and then runs back into the courtyard of his house and hides. Even if he has such evidence, he should give others a chance. In a law-governed state he cannot simply make accusations against people without also taking the responsibility if his accusations turn out to be groundless.

I do not think that it is correct to throw mud around, denigrate everything and everyone, and then seek refuge behind parliamentary immunity. I believe that the honest way is to present his evidence in court, if he really has any, and to ask for his immunity to be lifted so as to be able to appear in court and prove that what he said is true. But the way things are now, the struggle is unequal. He keeps making charges, saying certain things that he does not have to prove, denigrating a great many people and accusing them of various things, trying to maintain this foggy, ambiguous, and dirty atmosphere.

[Manta] It is known that one of the reasons why C.V. Tudor attacks certain people, groups of people, or political parties in his newspapers, is that they do not give in to his personal interests or demands. So what did C.V. Tudor request from the PDSR that was not granted?

[Nastase] We had many discussions on this, both during our four-party talks and in bilateral meetings. To a certain extent, I think it normal that political parties should have their own interests and should try to achieve them. There have been a great many requests from this party. The results were visible in the appointment of certain people to certain offices and we had some rough discussions on this issue. They used to come up with impressive lists of names of people whom the PRM was proposing for various offices. I do not wish to go into detail now, as this would mean playing in Tudor's own field. We wish to play in our own field, play it our style, and on the basis of the principles set by the PDSR. Our party has over 200,000 members, some of whom may not be immaculate. But to insult an entire party for this, in its entirety, seems absolutely inadmissible to me.

Romania: UDMR's View of Public Administration Law Seen

AU2203202996 Bucharest JURNALUL NATIONAL in Romanian 14 Mar 96 p 7

[Article by Mihaela Iordache: "UDMR Will Not Attack the Law on Public Administration in the Constitutional Court"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The UDMR [Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania] parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies held a news conference on 13 March and expressed its disapproval in connection with Article 26 of the recently endorsed Law on Local Public Administration. Although the leaders of parliamentary groups in principle agreed with the amendment proposed by the UDMR, by which the use of mother tongue in administrative-territorial units was suggested, the final vote nevertheless showed that it was rejected. This proves the "showcase character of the government's foreign policy and the actions of the chauvinistic forces," said Iuliu Vida, leader of the UDMR parliamentary group. In turn [UDMR Deputy] Attila Varga said that, by rejecting the respective amendment, the PDSR [the ruling Party of Social Democracy of Romania] "missed a great opportunity when, through a minimal concession made to the national minorities, it could have repaired something of Romania's image, which has already deteriorated regarding human rights and the rights of minorities in particular." It will not be possible to attack Law 69/1991 in the Constitutional Court because "the law is not constitutional" as long as the Constitution does not stipulate such a text, said Attila Varga.

Romania: Funar Vows To Jail 15 Mar Cluj Rally Attendees

AU2203152396 Bucharest COTIDIANUL in Romanian 18 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by MEDIAFAX: "Incredible, but Funar Has the Nerve To Threaten To Jail the People Who Attended the Cluj Rally"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Those who attended the commemorative rally organized on Friday [15 March] in Cluj by the UDMR [Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania], to honor the memory of [1848] revolutionaries Sandor Petofi and Nicolae Balcescu, will have to face the rigor of the law, Gheorghe Funar, the president of the PUNR [Romanian National Unity Party] stated at a press conference on Saturday. Funar pointed out that the commemorative rally had not been authorized by the Cluj Mayor's Office, and, as a consequence of this, it was illegal. The PUNR president added that Virgil Ardeleanu, chief of the Cluj-Napoca Municipality Police, had filmed the entire rally, and those who attended it would be identified and penalized according to the law, facing prison terms of one to three months.

The rally, which took place without any incidents, was attended by approximately 400 people.

Romania: Iliescu on State Department Human Rights Report

AU2203183396 Bucharest AZI in Romanian 18 Mar 96 p 3

[Article by T.M.: "The Romanian President Acting as Ad Hoc Teacher of the United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the U.S. State Department report on the situation of human rights in Romania, President Ion Iliescu pointed out that the Americans "do not quite understand" national feelings in Europe. This is why—the president hinted, as cited by the MEDIAFAX news agency—the aforementioned report refers to "the extremist rhetoric of the PUNR" [Romanian National Unity Party]. Their "misunderstanding" is a specific one, concerning especially the central European countries, which is "understandable," if one considers the [ethnic] composition of the United States and the way in which that country was set up by representatives of all the nations on the globe. Ion Iliescu assesses that the Americans link national feelings, which have broken out with a certain intensity in Europe, to the conflict situations that recently emerged in the former Yugoslav and former Soviet space, and, as a consequence of this, they are "very sensitive" about such kind of manifestations.

Slovenia: Croatian Foreign Minister Cancels Visit

LD2203152096 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1430 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ljubljana, March 22 (TANJUG)—Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic has cancelled his official visit to Slovenia planned for Friday.

The visit would have resumed dialogue between Slovenia and Croatian on some territorial disputes and demarcation on sea and land, the problem of the Krsko nuclear power plant and a growing tension resulting from the fact that the Slovenian Ljubljana Bank owes to Croatian clients a sum of nearly 800 million marks.

The cancellation was received in Slovenia as a sign of Zagreb's unpreparedness for compromise.

The Slovenian Foreign Ministry had announced Granic's visit as the opening of a new round of concrete talks between the two states and a prelude to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's official visit to Slovenia.

Slovenia: Decision on Referendum on Nuclear Plant To Be Made

AU2403155996 Ljubljana SLOVENEC in Slovene 12 Mar 96 p 3

[STA report: "Collecting Signatures for Referendum on Closing Nuclear Power Plant To Start on 19 March"]

[FBIS Translated Text] State Chamber Chairman Jozef Skolc yesterday decided on a 60-day period for collecting voters' signatures to call a provisional legislative referendum on closing down the Krsko Nuclear Power Plant. The signature collecting will begin on 19 March and end on 17 May 1996.

The initiative for this signature collection and calling of the referendum was made by Assembly Deputy Leo Seserko. If the proposers manage to collect 40,000 signatures, Slovene citizens will decide at the referendum in late spring whether they want the only nuclear power plant in Slovenia to be closed down by 2006. The referendum question will be as follows: "Do you want the State Chamber to adopt a law on closing down and decommissioning the Krsko Nuclear Power Plant, through which it will be established that, due to security reasons, the Krsko Nuclear Power Plant would be closed down by 31 December 2006 at the latest and its dimantling arranged?"

Federal

FRY: Arms Control Talks' Envoy Cites 'Discordant' Views

LD2203190596 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1738 GMT 22 Mar 96

["Pool" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Vienna, March 22 (TANJUG)—Ambassador Dragomir Djokic, head of a delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (F.R.Y.) to the Vienna talks on regional arms control in the Balkans, said Friday [22 March] that this meeting has now entered the stage of reviewing substantial issues.

Djokic said that the current debate dealt with two protocols, on the verification and exchange of information.

Participants in the negotiations (the F.R.Y., Croatia, the Bosnian Serb Republika Srpska, the Muslim-Croat Federation in Bosnia, the Muslim government in Sarajevo) held rather discordant views on the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the implementation of the arms control agreement, Djokic said, without specifying how the views differed.

The F.R.Y. holds to the stand that the arms control agreement must rely firmly upon the dayton documents and ensuing acts accepted by all the sides.

Djokic said, 'this is the only right way for us (Yugoslavia)—to have the conference ended June 6 in the signing of the agreement as has been planned.'

FRY: Platform Adopted for Talks With IMF, World Bank

LD2203191696 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1847 GMT 22 Mar 96

["Pool" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Belgrade, March 22 (TANJUG)—The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia adopted on Friday [22 March] a plaform for talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, scheduled in Paris on March 27.

The Yugoslav delegation will be headed by Dragoslav Avramovic, the governor of the Yugoslav National Bank, the Yugoslav Ministry of Information said in a statement.

Yugoslavia wishes to speedily reach agreement on the reactivation of its membership in the IMF and resumption of financial cooperation with this institution in creating an open and market-oriented economy. A resumption of Yugoslavia's membership is a precondition for reactivating its membership in the World Bank. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as the successor state to the former Yugoslavia, is a co-founder and signatory of the documents of the Bretton Woods conference on the setting up of the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in December 1945.

Yugoslavia's maintains that, as the successor state, it should resume its membership in the IMF and the World Bank. The U.N. international law commission has stated that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the successor after the secession of some of the territories of the former Yugoslavia.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is willing to meet its obligations towards the fund as soon as they normalize their relations. After that, new talks are expected with creditors on a consolidation and rescheduling of the foreign debt of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the statement said.

FRY: Ambassador Dapcevic Meets Ukrainian Foreign Minister

LD2303201796 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1859 GMT 23 Mar 96

["Pool" item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 23 (TANJUG)—Ukrainian Foreign Minister Gennadiy Udovenko said on Saturday [23 March] that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was an important factor in Europe's stability and that it had already integrated itself into the international community by pursuing a peaceful policy.

That should now be formalized in the interest of justice, Udovenko said, among other things, during a meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador to Ukraine Gojko Dapcevic.

Udovenko pointed to the importance of the peaceful policy pursued by the leaderships of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which he said had fully contributed to a just settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia and later to the drawing and implementation of the Dayton Accord.

Udovenko and Dapcevic agreed that the Ukrainian-Yugoslav relations based on friendship, tradition, close relations and mutual interests had excellent prospects.

They agreed that all conditions had been met for the signing of an overall ageement on political and economic cooperation.

Serbia

Serbia: Seselj's Radicals Plan Rally in Bijeljina

AU2203155096 Belgrade NASA BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 22 Mar 96 p 4

[Article by V. Didanovic: "Regular Pensions Before Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Belgrade—Vojislav Seselj, president of the Serbian Radical Party, supported yesterday at a news conference the demands of the workers in the metal industry, stressing that "only the change of authorities can solve" the poor social position. [passage omitted]

"The Serbian Radical Party is absolutely against the extradition of citizens of the FRY, RS [Serb Republic], and the RSK [Republic of Serb Krajina] to any foreign country or The Hague Tribunal," Seselj said in response to the journalist's request to comment on the possibility of Erdemovic and Kremenovic being extradited to the international court. He also said that any extradition would contravene the provisions of the Constitution.

The Serbian Radical Party has called for tomorrow a "big patriotic meeting in Bijeljina." The intention of the meeting, as Seselj said, is to "express the unity of the Serb people."

Serbia: Civic Council Reelects Party Chairperson

LD2403235596 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 2338 GMT 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Belgrade, 24 March (TANJUG)—The assembly of the Civic Council of Serbia this evening reelected Vesna Pesic party chairperson. [passage omitted]

Kosovo

Kosovo: LDK's Agani on Albanians' Role in Serb Elections

AU2303182096 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr. Fehmi Agani, vice-chairman of the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), told the Montenegrin independent weekly MONITOR that the Albanians of Kosova will not take part in the forthcoming Serbian elections. Albanians are loyal to the Kosova Assembly for only it has the legitimacy to call elections in Kosova, Agani said. "Albanians had their elections in 1992, they have elected their Parliament, which has of far been prevented (by the Serbian regime) from meeting," Agani stressed.

Asked to comment on the round-table discussion held recently in Belgrade under the sponsorship of the British Embassy, Dr. Agani said it has substantially promoted the idea that the Kosova issue requires an urgent settlement. However, one can not expect any settlement whatsoever in scientific meetings and round-table discussions, but rather in serious negotiations of political leaders, Agani told MONITOR.

Kosovo: Serb Authorities Reportedly Demolish Albanian Shops

AU2303165496 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Serbian-installed authorities in Kline [Klina] pulled down yesterday (Wednesday) [20 March] numerous Albanian-owned shops in the town center.

The LDK Information Commission in Kline said convicts had been brought to carry out the job.

The same sources said that a Serbian police expedition kept the town marketplace under siege for half an hour. Dozens of vendors and customers were reported robbed of large amounts of goods. The confiscated goods were later sent to the local police station in Kline, the report said.

Kosovo: Serbs Said To Deliver Summons to Albanian Youths

AU2303212396 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Over the last days, the Serbian Army authorities in Decan [Decani] have delivered summons to 450 Albanian youths who are supposed to register with them in the municipality.

The Prishtina-based BUJKU said in its today's issue that persons born on 1979 have been ordered to report at the Serbian Army headquarters in Peje [Pec]. The draft-age males have been threatened with harsh persecution if they failed to report to the army authorities.

The Serbian regime does not want to see Albanians in the Serbian Army, but rather to intimidate them and make them flee Kosova, President Rugova of Kosova said a couple of weeks ago in a press conference in Prishtina.

Kosovo: Serb Police Said To Raid Albanian Homes

AU2403194496

[FBIS Report] Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English Nos 839 and 840 on 21 and 22 March carry several reports on Serbian police violence against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

The Democratic League of Kosova (LDK) sources report that, on 19 March, the Serbian-installed authorities in Vucitrn "fenced the yard" of the elementary school at Lum i Madh village with "barbed wire," to "mark" it as "in possession of the Serbian Orthodox Church." In 1994, the Serbian-installed authorities "initiated the construction of an Orthodox Church on the land of schoolyard," where in fact "there is not at least one Serbian student to attend classes." It is said that "the fencing was reportedly the work of a Serb, Dimitrije Lilak, formerly a member to the Serbian Parliament."

Under the headline "Repression Chronicle," Report No 839 cites cases of Serb police harassment against Albanians in various areas. It is said that on 19 and 20 March, an Albanian was "summoned" to report to the Serbian police station in Prizren and was "questioned about his activity with the local Council of Culture and about a book published earlier dedicated to the Albanian Education Veterans." The Albanian was reported "released" on condition "to report back."

Sources from Klina say that the Serbian police on 14 and 16 March "raided" the homes of two Albanians from Sverrke village under the pretext of "arms searches." On 20 March, another Albanian was "summoned to report at the police station" and was "questioned about the activity of the LDK branch" and about the "personnel of the elementary school in his village."

Reports from Malisevo note that the Serbian police on 15 March raided the home of an Albanian who is a guest-worker abroad. It is said that "the police did not provide any explanation to his family members."

Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English No 840 on 22 March carries various reports on Serb harassment of Albanians.

It is reported that a Serbian police patrol on 21 March detained an Albanian geology student from Vucitrn at the central bus station in Pristina. The Pristina University student was "ill-treated for over half an hour" and "had his wallet and money seized by the police." When the Serb policemen found out that he was a Pristina University student, they "tore his students ID," telling him "it should be written in Serbian language alone." Pristina-based BUJKU reports that the Albanian was "subsequently sent to one of the offices of the bus station in Prishtina and subjected to additional harassment."

Another report notes that the Serbian police on 19 March "arrested" an Albanian from Llaushe village in Skenderaj and sent him the Serbian jail in Vucitrn. His family members told BUJKU that he was "sentenced to five months imprisonment" on grounds of "having refused to join the Serbian Army a couple of years ago."

Sources in Skenderaj say that, under "alleged charges" of being in search of arms, the Serbian police on 20 March "summoned" three Albanians from Vojnik village and one from Llaushe village to "report at the police station for interrogation." One of them was reported subject to "police torture."

Reports from Obiliq say that the Serbian police on 19 March "summoned" two Albanians from Shipitull village to "report" to the police station in Obiliq.

It is reported from Shtime that, "under the pretext of searching for arms," the Serbian police stationed in Shtime on 19 March "raided" the homes of three Albanian brothers at Sborc village. It is said that "under alleged charges of being in possession of arms," during this week the Serbian police in Shtime "summoned" to report to the police station an Albanian and his mother, three Albanians from Petrove, another one from Rashince, another from Zborc, one from Vojnovc, and another one from Shtime. Two of them were reported "subjected to police torture."

LDK sources in Hani i Elezit report that, on 20 March, the Serbian so-called fiscal police, "backed up" by the Serbian regular police, "looted the marketplace" in Hani i Elezit and "plundered all Albanian vendors."

Report from Malisevo note that, under "alleged suspicion" of being "in possession of weapons," on 21 March the Serbian police stationed in Orahovac arrested an Albanian from Qupeve village.

On 18 March, a Serbian police expedition stationed in Suva Reka "raided" the home of an Albanian in Lladroviq under the "pretext of searching for arms." As the sought Albanian is a "guest worker abroad," the police arrested his son and took him to the police station in Suva Reka, where he was "beaten up severely."

It is reported from Vucitrn that a Serbian police patrol on 21 March arrested Arif Gashi, secretary of the LDK sub-branch in Lum Madh village. The LDK activist was "accused of alleged possession of arms" and was "interrogated about his political activity." He was "released" but "ordered to report at the police station again."

Reports from Decani say that two Albanians from Ratishte village had been "summoned" to "report" to the police station in Irzniq for "three days in a row." LDK sources in Decani report that, under "alleged charges of being in possession of weapons," the police "beat them up severely."

On the morning of 22 March, the Serbian police arrested Xhafer Kabashi, an LDK activist from Prizren. Sources in Prizren say that "Mr. Kabashi was arrested twice over the past week and subjected to exhaustive interrogation at the Serbian state security headquarters."

Kosovo: Serb Police Seize Copies of Albanian Film

AU2303165296 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For over a week now, the Serbian police has been raiding on video-cassette-shops all over Kosova, in a bid to confiscate copies of a film "Nje Pallto per Babain tim ne Burg" (A Coat for My Convicted Father).

Adem Mikullovci, the author of the film, told KIC [Kosova Information Center] today the police has confiscated all copies of two parts of his film and has been intimidating the people involved in shooting and selling it. Video-cassette owners have been told by the Serbian police they would face persecution and have their shops closed down if a single copy of the film is sold in their shops.

Mr. Mikullovci said the police raided on yesterday (Wednesday) [20 March] a small private studio in Prishtina [Pristina] where the film was made, seizing the master-copy of the third part which was do to be launched by next month. Ekrem Dobercani and Ergyn Dobercani, editors of the film, were interrogated for a couple of hours and ordered not to use their equipment until they were issued a permission by the police.

The Serbian police raided likewise yesterday the home of Jusuf Rizvanolli, a cameraman who did the shooting. Mr. Rizvanolli was subsequently detained and cross-examined at the Serbian state security headquarters in Prishtina for eight hours. He was ordered to report back at the Serbian state security offices today morning.

Adem Mikullovci said his film is about a Kosova Albanian girl whose father is an inmate at a Serbian jail, and her struggles to send him a coat at his cold cell.

Kosovo: Committee Protests Trial of Albanian Writer

AU2303165096 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The trial of Mr. Sevdail Hyseni, writer and editor-in-chief of the Albanian weekly JEHONA in Bujanovc [Bujanovac] (Serbia), who is charged of "ridiculing the Serbian people, nations, and nationalities of Yugoslavia" was adjourned for 30 April, because the presiding judge was absent from the hearing session today, the Party for Democratic Action in Bujanovc reported.

The Kosova Helsinki Committee (KHC) has deplored Serbian regimes move to indict Sevdail Hyseni, BUJKU newspaper reported today.

Mr. Hyseni is to face charges for allegedly having composed poems ridiculing the Serbian regime.

The KHC recalls Mr. Hyseni was in last December subjected to a week long intimidation and ill-treatment by the Serbian security in Vranje.

KHC calls on the Serbian authorities to immediately drop charges against Sevdail Hyseni as well as to abrogate the decision with which they banned the only newspaper in Albanian language in the mainly Albanian populated region of southern Serbia (Presheva [Presevo], Bujanovc [Bujanovac], and Medvegja [Medveda]).

The Kosova human rights association urges that the rights to freedom of speech and press, envisioned by the very constitutions of Serbia and rump Yugoslavia, be respected by the Serbian regime.

Meantime, the Serbian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, based in Belgrade, has joined the protests against this trial. The Serbian Committee is reported to have appointed a defending lawyer for Mr. Hyseni.

Kosovo: Rugova Hails Success of 'Soft' Power

AU2303174796 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President of the Republic of Kosova Dr. Ibrahim Rugova acknowledged today (Friday) [22 March] a growing prominence of Kosova on the international scene, which solicits, as he said, the international community to commit itself to a solution of this important issue for the region and Europe on the basis of the political will of the people.

Speaking to reporters in Prishtina [Pristina], President Rugova hailed recent statements by American and European officials—Warren Christopher, Madeleine Albright, Flavio Cotti, Susanne Agnelli—who highlighted the seriousness of the situation and the need to address Kosova on its merits. Dr. Rugova thanked the USIA for the opinion analysis conducted in Kosova in late February and early March which reconfirmed the unequivocal and overwhelming support of the citizens of Kosova for independence of their country. "This is a touchstone which should be taken into consideration by the international community," he pointed out.

Dwelling on the current reality of Kosova, President Rugova said Serbian regime's repression against Albanians has continued unabated: Albanian homes are raided on systematically up and down Kosova, with dozens of individuals of all walks of life suffering maltreatment in the hands of the Serbian police, at a time political, educational, and human rights activists are targeted mostly. He denounced the stopping at the Kosova-FYROM border of Adem Demaci, chairman of the Prishtina-based CDHRF [Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms], who was on his way to Brussels. "This was a mean police act against a prominent humanist," Dr. Rugova said.

President Rugova of Kosova deplored Serbian regime's scheme to go ahead with further Serbianization of Kosova by building what he called primitive monuments, such as the planned anti-Albanian monument at the Banja e Pejes.

"This is a dangerous move," he said, adding that Serbia has continued looting the private businesses of the Albanians in Kosova.

Serbian repression should be brought to an end and hundreds of Albanian political prisoners released, the Kosova president said, noting that Kosova's independence is the optimal solution, with an international civil administration being put in place first here.

Asked for his comments about the possibility of an interim international civil administration in Kosova, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova said there are different proposals for such a step, which could be put in place by the UN, EU, or the U.S.A., respectively.

President Rugova said in a reply that there has been progress in relations of Albania with Greece, noting that the latter, a member country of the European Union, should play a positive role in the Balkans. "The important thing is that Albania, too, is becoming an important factor in the region," he added.

Asked to comment on the "distribution of power" in Kosova, Dr. Rugova said he runs his duties as president of the republic, the Kosova Parliament functions in the form of parliamentarian committees, in due agreement with the Kosova president. "The promulgation of the Constitution of Kosova, the conducting of the referendum and the elections have been carried out while the country has been in a state of emergency, for the situation has been such," he said, replying to a question related to the possibility of declaring a state of emergency, envisioned by the Kosova Constitution.

"I have in the prevailing circumstances wielded a soft rather than a tough power, and this has proven successful so far and duly appreciated by the world," president of the Republic of Kosova emphasized.

The elected deputies to the Parliament of Kosova and the president have had a shared view about the situation in Kosova and the possibility and viability of the parliament's meeting, Mr. Hydajet Hyseni said, when he was asked to join the discussion.

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